



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

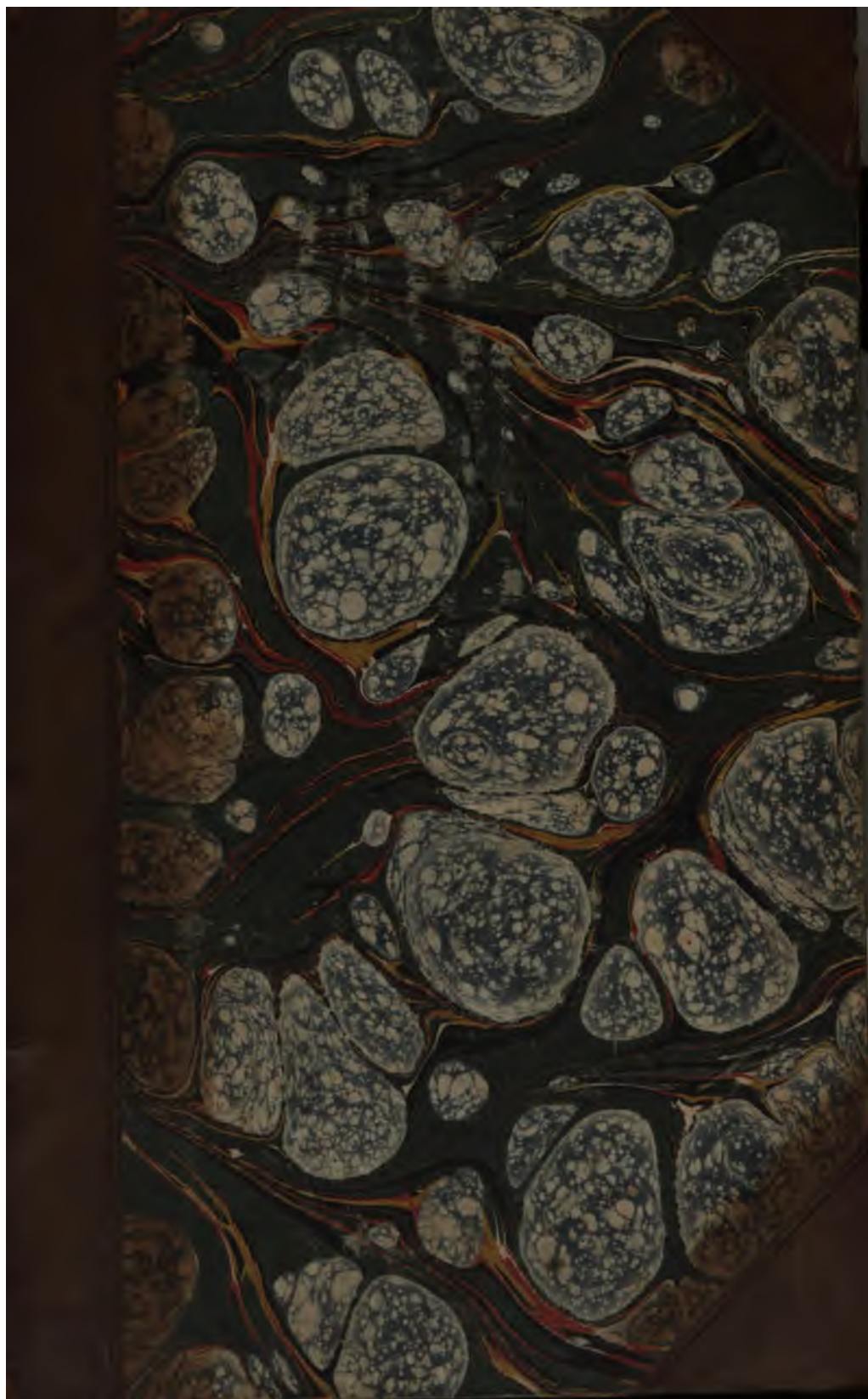
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



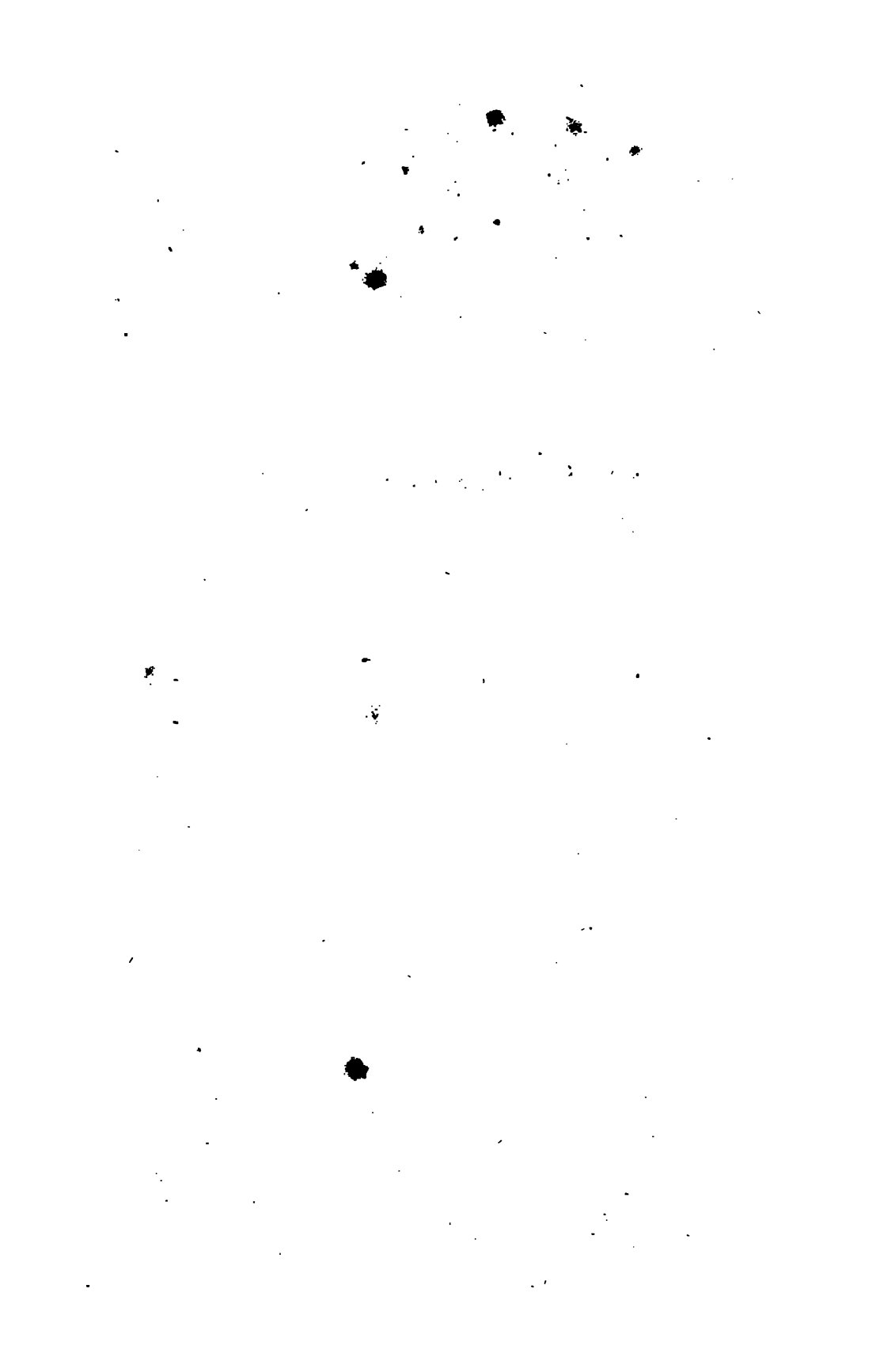
600000771Q

30.

416.







J.H. 1830
Julio Romano:

89
OR,

THE FORCE OF THE PASSIONS.

AN EPIC DRAMA.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BY CHARLES BUCKE,

AUTHOR OF THE BEAUTIES, HARMONIES, AND SUBLIMITIES OF
NATURE.

— Me Parnassi deserta per ardua dulcis
Raptat amor: juvat ire jugis, quæ nulla priorum
Castaliam molli divertitur orbita clivo.

VIRG. GEORG. III. l. 291.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT

1830.

416.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

TO THE
KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,
GEORGE THE FOURTH,

This humble attempt to create a new species of Drama is most respectfully dedicated by one, who, having thoroughly acquainted himself with the crimes, errors, benefits, and misfortunes of past ages, is the better able to appreciate the peace, splendour, and comparative happiness of the present reign.

THE AUTHOR.



PREFATORY MEMOIR.

TO

JOHN HENRY WILMOT, ESQ.

FLORENCE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU remember, no doubt, (for you were in England at that time), how I was treated in respect to a Tragedy, called the *ITALIANS*. Time, however, reconciles us to most things; and since the injury has neither been justified, nor repeated, I derive consolation from the reflection, that as I neither provoked that conduct in the first instance, so I have never attempted to revenge it in the second*. But having, one day,

* For the use of those, who may have forgot the circumstances, to which I allude; and for that of those, who may

amused myself in turning over the leaves of that ill-fated production, I thought I perceived, that it was not quite so worthless as it had been the policy of some few to make others believe; and I resolved, in consequence, on writing another drama; partly grounded on the same foundation. That is, I employed some of the old marble, wherewith to build another temple.

Having finished my new structure, there remained some difficulty as to the best method of

never have heard of them, I print the following advertisement, taken from a Journal, published at Nottingham, a short time after.

“ THEATRE, NOTTINGHAM.

“ On Monday evening, June 15, 1819, will be acted the new Tragedy of the ITALIANS. The unprecedented and illiberal treatment of the Author of this play, from a party, predetermined to disapprove, and placed in the Theatre for that purpose, having perhaps in a greater degree, than the most consummate success, rendered the performance highly interesting to all ranks, Mr. CARTER, in obedience to a generally expressed wish, has been induced to present the inhabitants of Nottingham and its vicinity with an opportunity of forming their own judgment on a point, which has caused a sensation without example in the annals of Dramatic History.”

disposition. For if to cause it to be performed would subject the labour of my thought to great hazard;—to publish it might have effects more permanently disastrous; since proprietors of theatres profess to enjoy the right of appropriating all published dramas to their own use; entailing all the personal hazard, and all the disgrace, in case of failure, on the author; and retaining for themselves all the pecuniary benefit, in the event of success. *Sic vos non vobis.*

Having, on mature consideration, determined not to encounter the perils of the stage, I applied to a celebrated dramatic reader to know whether he would honour me so far, as to give my production a public reading at the ARGYLE ROOMS and FREEMASONS' HALL.

Previous to giving an answer, Mr. S— desired a perusal; and then did me the honour to say, that he would read it with very great pleasure. In consequence of this, measures were adopted for a public reading, in the month of May, 1828; but it having struck me, that unless

the whole of my drama were recited, (which is seldom or ever done, in what is called a *Dramatic Reading*), it would be impossible for an audience to have a true idea of the characters, or a just conception of the plot, I wrote to Mr. S——, and received the following letter in reply.

“DEAR SIR,

“I have, at your request, re-perused your Drama. I have been delighted with the spirit of pœtry, caught from the study of Nature, which breathes through the whole of it:—I acknowledge the characters of ROMANO and SCHIDONI to possess great dramatic force; and that a strong interest is created by the story, and kept up to the end;—and yet, with all this, I must declare my conviction,—since you do me the honour to ask my opinion,—that a public reading by me, using my best efforts in your service, would infallibly disappoint both the public and yourself. Its beauties, if I except some particular passages, are not of that kind that an audible reading can heighten. They often require to be dwelt upon again and again, before their full beauty, and sometimes, indeed, even their intention, appears. I did not fully make out the drift of the early scenes till the second perusal; and I could not hope to make them clearer to an audience, than I found them myself*. Many of

* On receiving this letter, I altered the scenes alluded to, so as to render their design more obvious; and, in fact, almost wrote the Drama over again.

the situations are beautiful and striking in the extreme. These would be *conceived* by the silent reader;—they would be *represented* on the stage; but in what is called a Dramatic Reading they would be wholly lost. I know, by long experience, that an audience, who listen to a reciter, are alive to nothing but the expression of the passions; and that all the delicate beauties of pœtry are quite unobserved, or, at least, are flat and languid. I dare not read even a play of Shakspeare's as a whole; but am obliged to select for my purpose, and refer to the written page and silent perusal for the rest.

“Such being the candid opinion, which you requested from me, I return your MS., with many thanks for the honour, which your intention conferred upon me. Presuming, that you will now alter that intention,

“ Believe me, dear sir, &c. &c.”

On receiving this critical, and very friendly letter, I resolved on publishing my Drama:—but found it discreet, first of all, to apply to the managers and proprietors of Drury-lane and Covent-garden Theatres, requesting that they would oblige me so far as not to perform it without my consent.

Through the kindness of Mr. YOUNG, the very eminent and accomplished tragedian, I obtained,—not a written promise from Mr.

KEMBLE, that my Tragedy should not be performed at Covent-garden Theatre without my consent; but an understanding, that no *advantage would be taken*. I was not so fortunate, however, with the Lessee of the rival establishment.

“ Theatre Royal, Drury-lane,
“ August 19, 1828.

“ SIR,

“ I am requested by Mr. Price to state, that *he cannot give you any distinct pledge, as to not performing your tragedy after publication;*—but if, upon its perusal, he should deem it advantageous to the Theatre to produce it, it is not his wish or inclination to debar you of the fair chance of remuneration, according to its merits; nor *can he consent to give any sum, even should he approve it*. Trusting this may not interfere with your views,

“ I am, sir, your obedient servant,

“ J. COOPER.”

“ Theatre Royal, Drury-lane,
“ August 21, 1828.

“ SIR,

“ If you will send your tragedy to me, I will read it at my earliest leisure, and will give you my opinion as to the *probability* of its being produced after publication:—but Mr. Price cannot give any distinct *pledge* upon that point.

“ I am, &c. &c.

“ J. COOPER.”

“ To J. COOPER, Esq.

“ SIR,

“ I will read my drama to Mr. Price or yourself, upon condition, that if Mr. Price or you do not think it will suit the interest of the Theatre to play it *before* publication, Mr. Price will give me a pledge not to play it afterwards.

“ My earnest desire is, that this drama should *not* run the hazard of a representation. But I must yield to circumstances. If Mr. Price, therefore, upon hearing it read, wishes to play it, he may do so, on securing me the sum I can procure for the copyright.

“ This I consent to ; not from choice, but compulsion ; thinking it very hard, and, at the same time, a very great disgrace to the legislature of this country, that an author has not the same right to the produce of his mind, that others have to the produce of their lands.

“ I am, sir, your obedient servant,

“ CHARLES BUCKE.”

“ Theatre Royal, Drury-lane,
“ August 25th, 1828.

“ SIR,

“ I have again seen Mr. Price on the subject of your tragedy, and regret, on your part, that I have only to repeat what I before stated, that Mr. Price cannot consent to give any distinct pledge, as to not producing it after publication. *He cannot be so unmindful of his duty to the public and himself, as not to produce a good tragedy.*

“ I am, sir, your obedient servant,

“ J. COOPER.”

Having laid aside all intention of a public reading; and finding myself liable to be exposed to the danger of having my effort mangled on the stage, I resolved on endeavouring to get, if possible, an act of parliament passed to guard dramatic literary property from the piracies, to which they are exposed. I wrote, in consequence, to Sir James Mackintosh, requesting him to bring the subject before the House of Commons: and Sir James having signified his readiness so to do, I drew up the necessary petition; and he did me the honour to present it to the House on the fourth of last June.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

June 4, 1829.

The ministers not having appeared in their places, the House was about to adjourn, when Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH rose to state, that he hoped no adjournment would take place, as he had a petition of some importance to present.

The House then entered into several matters of routine, and the ministers having made their appearance, a petition was read from several merchants at the Cape of Good Hope, relative to the currency. Sir James Mackintosh then rose and stated, that he held in his hand a petition from a Dramatic Writer, complaining of what every one must allow to be a very great grievance. "I shall not enter into the particulars of the petition," said Sir James, "since the petition will speak for itself; but I will say, that the present laws, respecting literary property, are very imperfect; more especially those relating to the drama. Nothing can be more vexatious or unjust, than the manner in which dramatic authors are treated. If a man of genius chooses to publish a dramatic poem, I see no reason why a theatrical manager should be at liberty to convert that to his own private advantage; and that, too, without awarding any remuneration for the fruits of an author's genius and labour. Several eminent writers have complained of this grievance; amongst whom it is

sufficient to mention Lord Byron*. The subject well deserves the attentive consideration of parliament. The rights of Authors are less respected by the law and the tribunals in this country, than in any other that has the least pretensions to literary character. The law of England should be grounded on a proposition similar to that of France†: and till that is done, the public can never rationally expect Dramatic

* Some years since I presumed to ask this highly-gifted poet, why he did not turn his genius to writing for the stage. "I know theatres too well," answered his lordship; "I am sick of them. Besides—should I not be a fool, and a confounded fool, too, to risk my reputation in a place where any rascal may hiss me for a shilling?"

† By the laws of France dramatic writers receive a per centage on the receipts throughout the whole country. From the Gazette of St. Petersburg of last June we learn, that authors receive, during their lives, the following shares of the receipts of the Imperial Theatres of the two capitals, on the days when their pieces are performed.

For Tragedies and Comedies in five acts, $\frac{1}{10}$ of the gross receipts.

Ditto in four acts - - - $\frac{1}{15}$ ditto.

Operas - - - - $\frac{1}{20}$ ditto.

Translations in prose - - - $\frac{1}{25}$ ditto.

Here we find SCYTHIA dictating laws for a country, which combines the several excellencies of ATHENS, CARTHAGE, and ROME!

Literature to rise from its present degraded condition.”

The petition was then read :—setting forth

“That the Petitioner some years since wrote a tragedy, which having published, the then directors of Drury-lane Theatre seized upon it immediately upon its publication ; and, though he made the most earnest entreaties to the contrary, acted in the face of an opposition, they had themselves provoked ; and, after clearing by it two large sums of money, refused to allow the Petitioner any compensation for the wrongs they had done him, the time he had devoted, the journeys he had taken, the money he had expended, and the many inconveniences to which they had personally exposed him :—and all this upon the ground (as signified by their Secretary) that, having published his tragedy, the Petitioner had made it amenable to the appropriation of all licensed theatres throughout the kingdom.

“ This right of appropriation, theatrical proprietors assume, not on the basis of any existing law to justify the usurpation, but on the absence of all law to prevent it : a state of legislation in direct hostility to those fundamental principles of the British constitution, which profess to insure to every one the benefits, arising from his own genius, talents, and industry. For by this absence (which indeed can be considered in no other light than as a barbarism, worthy of the darkest age of human society), theatrical proprietors enjoy the exclusive privilege of seizing at will upon another man’s property, of moulding it to their pleasure, of reaping the harvest, and, as a suitable corollary to their injustice, of entailing upon those, they have injured, all the personal hazard during a trial for

their benefit ; and all the violence, insolence, and impertinence of unworthy minds, in the event of non-success.

“ The Petitioner, undeterred by past injury, having written another tragedy, entitled ‘ JULIO ROMANO,’ is naturally desirous of publishing it : but having suffered in the manner above described, and being desirous of preventing a recurrence of similar results, he applied to the lessee of Drury-lane Theatre for a promise not to perform his tragedy after publication without his consent. To this application the Petitioner received three direct refusals.

“ Should the Petitioner publish his tragedy, and any theatrical proprietor afterwards think proper to act it, the copyright would be in danger of being entirely destroyed ; for the time is gone by, when a representation can add to the value of a copyright. For those, who might be desirous of reading it, as a work adapted to the closet, would not read it at all if successful at the theatre ; from an apprehension of its being merely an acting tragedy, ‘ full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.’ The public at large, on the other hand, reluctant to patronize any thing, to which the smallest idea of failure is attached, would, if unsuccessful at the theatre, lose all regard in respect to it at once, on the ground, that nothing can be worthy to be read, that is not in harmony with the taste,—and sometimes the very questionable taste,—of an audience, assembled at a theatre.

“ The Petitioner presumes to suggest, that, as dramatic writing has been, in all ages, esteemed the most difficult of all departments for the exercise of the human mind, and yet that department, for which our country has been more distinguished than any other nation in the world, it cannot be otherwise than especially worthy the best patronage, the British legislature can bestow. But for a multitude of years

last past, such patronage has been left to the discretion of persons, whose only ambition and solicitude have been directed to the filling of their own coffers ; and that so entirely regardless of the reputation of the country, that a good song, sung by a good singer, has become of more value, in a theatrical sense, than the finest production of the loftiest genius.

“ Hence the present degradation of the stage ; and hence the present deficiency in respect to dramas, adapted for the closet. For what competent hand will write for the decision of superior minds, when his production is liable to be seized upon by unauthorized authorities ; to be sometimes mutilated by persons deficient in learning, in taste, in judgment, and in critical qualifications ; to be personified by others, perhaps, unequal to the duty of correct delineation ; and, finally, to be placed at the discretion, not of an audience, composed of elegant and enlightened minds, but of an assemblage, composed of all orders, spread over a wide theatre, where good writing falls a martyr to the impatience of the vulgar ; where the judgments of some are disgraced by ignorance and presumption ; and those of others warped by prejudice, jealousy, and envy ; and where the whole are so distracted by the interruptions, incident to a first performance, that to see, to hear, to listen, and to judge with critical precision, is always attended with doubt and hazard, and not unfrequently even with an utter incapacity of judgment ?

“ Such being the true and unvarnished state of the subject, the Petitioner, urged by the wrong he has suffered, and by the honest hope of future consideration ;—relying on the justice of his cause, and the legislative wisdom of parliament, humbly prays the House to take the subject into consideration, with a view of providing a law, that no *person or persons*

shall, during the period of an author's life, and in case of death from the period of fourteen years from the first publication of his piece, perform for money, or emolument of any kind, any tragedy, comedy, melo-drama, opera, after-piece, or by whatever name or title such piece may be known or called, in any theatre, house, or other place of entertainment in any city, town, borough, village, hamlet or place, in England, Ireland, Scotland, or the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, without the consent of the author, authors, or his, or her, or their representatives, signed in the presence of two or more witnesses, on a stamp, value ten shillings, under penalty of FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS; to be paid on conviction before two or more magistrates; one half to the king, and the other half to the author, or his, or her, or their representative or representatives."

The petition having been read, the Honourable GEORGE LAMB rose to support its general prayer. "It is monstrous," said the honourable member, "that the law should have remained in such a state so long as it has. Not only the managers of the London theatres, but of the provincial ones, should pay authors for the privilege of performing their pieces; let those pieces be what they may; more especially pieces of the highest class. As the practice

stands, it is nothing less than a plunder, exceedingly iniquitous; therefore deserving the especial interference of parliament. It is a grievance not only to authors, but to the public. Since the public mind is enlightened by dramatic writers; and the people derive great pleasure and satisfaction from their exertions. It is a grievance, too, of great magnitude, that a drama, written, perhaps, expressly for the closet, should be seized upon by theatrical managers, and an author's fame, *volens volens*, placed in great jeopardy; since every one knows the hazard, to which a representation subjects even the most celebrated writers. When the subject comes regularly before the house, I hope that measures will be taken to ensure better rewards; and then the country may expect to be rewarded in return by better pieces."

The petition was then ordered to be laid on the table, entered on the journals, and printed.

"HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"JUNE 22, 1829.

"The Honourable George Lamb gave notice of a bill to alter and extend the provisions of the act of 8 *Anne*, c. 19. 41 *Geo. III.* and 54 *Geo. III.* c. 156. with respect to dramatic writings."

"FEBRUARY 23, 1830.

"Mr. Lamb moved for leave to bring in a bill for the purpose of amending the 34th of *Geo. III.* relating to dramatic copyrights. One of the objects of his measure was, to prevent the performance of any dramatic piece without the consent of the author; and another was, after a play had been performed at one theatre to prevent its being acted at another, unless a certain per centage was allowed to the author.—*Leave was given.*"

Here the matter rests for the present.—
March 12.

The subject having proceeded thus far, I determined on postponing the publication of my drama, till Parliament had signified its pleasure in respect to the general subject; but a letter from an honourable member of the House of Commons dissipated all appre-

hensions; and I resolved to publish, in consequence, with the least possible delay*.

* The editor of a Sunday paper, a few days after the publication of the *ITALIANS*, printed the whole of the preface, word for word. Of this he printed and sold (as verified at the Stamp Office) eleven thousand five hundred copies! This act of piracy injured the author's pecuniary interests very much. But the abuse did not stop here. On being remonstrated with, he dispersed small hand-bills all over the town, promising to give a full account, in his next paper, of what *might* take place at the representation. He did so; and as a suitable finale to such a concerto, took part with the—enemy!

I state this in the hope, that a similar conduct may not be adopted again.

Most persons ran away with an impression, that I made a large sum of money by the *ITALIANS*. It certainly had a sale much superior to any other tragedy (similarly treated) ever published in this country. But if it had never been performed at Drury-lane Theatre, I would not have sold my work on the Beauties, Harmonies, and Sublimities of Nature, for a less sum than TWO THOUSAND POUNDS. As it was, I sold it for a very (comparatively) small sum: and the publisher had no very great reason, I believe, to be inordinately proud of his bargain. So much is the public actuated by the smallest suspicion of ill-success. The play was bought; the preface only read. Hence may be calculated, in some degree, the injury received.

The Author, having resolved to keep this drama from the stage, gave unlimited range to his imagination; and permitted himself gradually to be animated with an ambition of producing, by an enlargement of the drama, a new species, as it were, of epic poem.

Pale, trembling, tired, the sailors freeze with fears;
For instant death on every wave appears.

HOMER;—ODYSSEY;—POPE.

There was never a period more alive to the policy of rewarding TALENT than the present; and it will ever be so in ages of surface and speculation, mechanism and pretence. But GENIUS,—as in all former times,—continues to enjoy only one stimulus and one reward;—the pleasure, derivable from the exercise of its own amplitude. She still sits, in

the midst of her creations, silent, melancholy, self-conscious, and abashed ;

“ A deathless monument of the wrong, she suffers.”

In painting, such is her attitude ; in sculpture, in architecture, and in music. With some exceptions, too, such is her attitude in respect to poetry. Glitter, affectation, and conceit have,—for a time,—driven the classics almost entirely out of the field. An Essay was written on the Life, Writings, and Genius of AKENSIDE, and a respectable bookseller assured the author, that Akenside was, in the present day, so little known, and so little valued, that he could scarcely expect to sell ten copies.

O pater, O hominum Divûmque æterna potestas !

For my own part, I know what to expect. I have aspired to melody of style, to harmony of thought, to brevity of imagination, and true sublimity of passion. But I have studied masterpieces too long, and too deeply, ever

to expect being associated with models. I admire, intensely, what I feel conscious of having no power to equal. But an honourable attempt should, nevertheless, be met with an honourable reward.

READER!—I will suppose thee to be one, who can appreciate the difficulties of an arduous attempt. Judge with your own unadulterated taste. Consult nature in all her delicacy and tenderness, simplicity and magnificence; and being calm, accomplished, meditative, and imaginative, decide whether the Author may ever hope to exclaim with CORREGIO, “I, too, am a painter;” or whether,—unequal to so ample a distinction,—he may yet have the honour to select for an epitaph—

Quem si non tenuit magnis tamen excidit ausis.

Whatever I may, hereafter, feel disposed to write, certain it is, I believe, that I shall never have the leisure to enjoy the harmonic serenity, (if such an expression may be allowed in a preface), of writing another drama. I may, therefore, perhaps, be allowed to leave a codicil to this my last dramatic will and testament. It is simply this ;—that as I have not yielded to the imbecility and guilt of writing a drama, with only one character to support it, I entreat, that, should this drama ever be thought worthy of being curtailed for representation on the stage, no one, who shall take the trouble of curtailing it, will be so unjust to the memory of the author, as not preserve every character in its due proportion.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NEAPOLITANS.

FERDINAND, *King of Naples.*
FONTANO, *an old Nobleman.*
LORENZO, *Captain of the Guard.*
SCHIDONI, *a Nobleman.*
VERCELLI, *an Officer.*
VELUTRI, *an instrument of Schidoni.*
FATHER JEROME, *Abbot of St. Salvator.*
BARNARDINE, *a Fisherman.*

VENETIANS, MILANESE, &c.

ROMANO, *a Venetian Nobleman.*
FRACASTRO, *Nephew to Romano.*
LEPARDÒ, }
MARCO, } *Officers sent from Venice, Milan, &c. to Romano.*
SARDO, }
CARLO, }
BERNARDO, }

WOMEN.

LAVINIA, *Fontano's Daughter.*
FLORANTHE, *an Improvisatrice.*
THERESA, *Schidoni's Housekeeper.*
MARGERY, *the Fisherman's Wife.*

Masks ;—Monks ;—and Soldiers.

SCENES—*The King's Palace at Naples ; the Monastery of St. Salvator ; the ruins of an old Castle among the Apennines, &c.*



JULIO ROMANO.

BOOK I.

SCENE I.

Naples.—Piazzas near the King's palace.

An Assemblage, disguised in various habits; amongst whom are FONTANO and VELUTRI. After a short time, they retire in the back-ground, leaving SCHIDONI gazing upon them with an air of derision.

Schid. THIS day, I thank dame Fortune, is the last
Of this year's carnival. These men and women
Are so intent upon their phantasies,
Their idle, frivolous, fantastic phantasies,
That it would seem, as if a carnival
Could ne'er make knaves and fools of them again.
Who can this be, that separates from the crowd,
And scans me thus? Fontano—so—Fontano!

Beheld two figures by the moonlight sitting,
 Wrapt in close converse, in St. Michael's porch.
 Who should they be?—Fontano and Lorenzo.
 At length they rose in silence, and walk'd on:
 But I, returning to the spot, beheld
 This hateful letter, which, no doubt, Lorenzo
 By accident had dropp'd. There thou may'st read
 Fontano's treason and Lorenzo's guilt.

King. It is his hand—it is Fontano's hand;
 And this his signet, as I hope for heaven!

*“To Lorenzo, Captain of the King's guard.
 “Romano has received offers of assistance from the
 Doge of Venice and the Duke of Mantua, in which
 cities he has large possessions, and, as a natural
 consequence, great influence.”*

He writes as if he thought Romano wrong'd!

*“Write to him:—say we are his, and shall be
 ready for action the very moment that his suc-
 cours reach him. In respect to Lavinia, act as I
 wish, and she is yours.*

“FONTANO.”

League with the assassin of my brother's daughter?
 One who excites, too, all the neighbouring states
 Against our power, authority, and life?
 Command his instant lodgement in the castle.

Schid. Sire, it was done the very moment, I
 Could prove Fontano guilty. For Lorenzo—
 Him we must search for; lest delay should give
 New life and vigour to their traitorous hope.

King. 'Tis wisely counsell'd; and we thank you, sir.
 Ye gracious powers! I would ye had ordain'd
 Me some lone goatherd, that, 'mid rocks and glens,
 From week to month, from month to weary year,
 Pursues his wild, ungovernable flock;
 Than have my fortune wedded to a sceptre.

Schid. How many a man would wreck the world to
 wield one!

King. Ah, little think th' ambitious in their pride,
 What toilsome days and anxious nights they court,
 When dukedoms, thrones, and empires, are their wish!
 Do with the traitors as ye list.

Schid. (*aside.*) Mark that.

[*Exit the King, followed by the company.* VE-
 LUTRI comes slowly down the stage.

Thus is 't to be too sudden in belief.
 Do as I list?—The words delight me well.
 Do as I list!—The deed is done already.
 Welcome, Velutri. All goes well. What now?
 Art thou a statue cut in ice?—The matter?

Music;—there 's music in the air to-day.

What is the matter with thee, man? speak out.

Vel. Why did you frown and spurn me so just now?

Schid. I fear'd, Fontano might suppose us friends.

Vel. Well:—if he did?

Schid. Well: if he did? Suppose,

We see two adders, lurking under hemlock,

Shall we not guard our footsteps from their stings?

He is the man, I told thee of. Look here.

[*Taking out a box.*

This is rich dust of diamonds. Throw a little,

Ever so little, in his eyes:—they 're quench'd!

Vel. (*taking the box, and handling the dust.*)

I've done: I'm satisfied. I never knew,

That dust of diamonds had a power so fatal.

There lie. One question—

Schid. Softly, signor, softly.

Walls,—when there 's mischief,—have a sense of hearing.

Now, then, thy question?—nay, propose it—speak!

Vel. Whence springs this hatred to a man like
him?

Schid. From a base insult, that he pass'd on me,
When I proposed a marriage with his daughter.

Vel. Cause all-sufficient. And the hate you bear——

Schid. Julio Romano? That were deeper laid.
Curses eternal on his hated name!

Vel. I hear, his notary,—old Clemento,—he,
Who met the king upon the stairs, last night,
And begg'd an audience, which the king refused,
At your suggestion,—has, this very morn,
Posted again, on all the city walls,
Rewards of ten, nay fifteen, thousand ducats,
For information where Romano's daughter
Is to be found. If dead, five thousand. Ay,
I wish I knew; I'd not be long in telling.

Schid. Stop, sir: damnation! don't I tell thee, stop?
What has Romano, or Romano's child,
With us to do? I tell thee once again;
—And must I sound it in thine ears like thunder?—
I loathe his name. You ask me wherefore. Wherefore?
He stabb'd his wife. You know he did—you know it.

Vel. (aside.) That I do not.

Schid. Yes; all the world doth know it:
Even the babe upon its mother's breast.
He stabb'd the woman, whom I loved; and may
Eternal torments lacerate his body.
As to his daughter—(*aside*) past all human reach!

Vel. Well, then, thy rival in Lavinia's love—

Schid. The mild, sweet-scented eglantine, Lorenzo?

Vel. Is he not prison'd?

Schid. He is not: but shall be.

I'm told, he has been lurking near my mansion.

If I should find him——!

Vel. And Lavinia's father?

Schid. Safe:—yes, he's safe.

Vel. What more?

Schid. Ah—ha! what more?

Why, what a velvet simpleton thou art!

Bind revenge fast. I've done but little; little?

Nay, I've done nothing, should I stop at this.

Hast seen Lavinia?

Vel. I have not.

Schid. She is

More fair, more lovely, than the gods e'er look'd on.

Her father, jealous of impending ruin,

Fix'd on his many-a-year tried servant, Paulo,

—It does astonish me, how little skill

These *wise* men have in reading characters—

I say, he fix'd upon his faithful Paulo,

T' escort her hence to Venice; where his sister,

Who, you must well remember, some years since,

Losing her lover in the holy wars,

Gave all her fortune to Saint Catherine's convent.
 Hence she was chosen as its abbess. Ay,
 Nuns, monks and bishops, cardinals and popes,
 —I hope I do not libel such good persons—
 Know well—full well—where richest olives grow.
 But pass them by; my object is Lavinia.
 Knowing the plan,—I hailed the faithful Paulo
 With many a ducat; and I added, also,
 A well string'd viol;—for the man loves music.
 Hence comes the issue.

Vel. What is that?

Schid. The question!

Where hast thou lived? Canst not anticipate?
 I have Lavinia at my mansion, hid
 Deep in the forest. Wherefore, you may guess;
 Without a volume written to instruct thee.
 I will inflict such vengeance—

Vel. On Lavinia?

On one you love?—so beautiful! By heaven,
 There is no knowing what a man will do,
 When once revenge gets master of his reason.

Schid. Nonsense:—hear this. I hate the father more,
 Than I approve the daughter. Hatred is
 The master passion of the two; and can I

Ruin his hopes, and paralyse his pride,
More than by her dishonour?

Vel. Dost thou not

Intend to marry fair Lavinia then?

Schid. Marry the devil! But why trifle thus?
Be at the prison when the moon rides high.
That is, at midnight. Take that poisonous dust.
Throw it, all sudden, in his eyes; and he
Will see the sun, the moon, the stars, no more.
Never! no, never! When the deed is done,
(I shall reward thee with a thousand ducats)
Lead him, I charge thee, to a precipice.
Nay, why d' ye start?—I say, a precipice!
There let him toil and totter as he may;
And where he plants his pestilential foot,
May the grass wither and the earth grow poison.
All deaf to sighs—be blind as rocks to tears.
Spurn all the eloquence of convulsive hands,
Low-bending knees, and wild, impang'd, entreaty.
Leave him,—'tis meet!—unto the care of him,
Who watches ever, as good canons say,
The wise man's fortunes. Let him see what fate
This power, benignant, has reserv'd for him.
Till, grasping air, all breathless he shall stand,

On the cragg'd margin of a yawning gulf;
Where, hopeless, helpless, desolate, the blast
Shall hurl him, headlong, down th' o'er-hanging steep,
And whelm his grey hairs in the thundering deep.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Quarry of green and white marble among the Apennines. A cave, near the entrance to which is a crucifix. On the other side stands an unfinished statue of a beautiful woman, hanging a miniature round the neck of her daughter.

LEPARDO *moving some books and musical instruments into the cave.*

ROMANO

sitting on the fragment of a rock, with a book in one hand, and a sculptor's chisel in the other.

Rom. Plato, Boethius, Dante, and Petrarca;

All fail:—all fail! This sacred image never.

O thou fair emblem of the loveliest form,

That e'er gave rapture to the sculptor's chisel,
Thou—thou alone—canst wrap me from myself,
And bind oblivion round my aching brow.

[*Begins working at the figures.*

—Angel Francesca;—would I ne'er had seen,
Or never lost thee! For in thee I lived;
And, having lost thee, die a thousand deaths,
In every moment I'm constrain'd to live.
What ho;—Lepardo! send Fracastro hither.

[*LEPARDO exit up the quarry.*

Nine years, nine anxious, agonizing, years
Have crept their circuits, since I first took refuge
In the deep bosom of this Apennine.
And here,—till now some few short nights,—alone,
Palsied and dumb with anguish, I have watch'd
The changeful moon, and stars unnumber'd, roll
Their silent courses through the firmament.
Here, too, amid these awful piles, which seem
Disjointed fragments of some ruin'd world,
I've heard, all breathless, intonations loud
Echo, and then re-echo; while the lightning
Flash'd in wild glory through the dark serene
Of heaven's imperial concave. As I gazed,
Space, time, motion, death, the past, the future,

All have been melted to one awful chaos,
In my mind's kingdom. Many a silent prayer,
Heart-struck, I've breathed; and many a secret vow,
Ere life should fade in emptiness away,
To lay yon hated palaces in ruins.
Long did I vow in vanity. At length,
Venice and Mantua promise me revenge;
And Naples shudders at the oath, I've taken.

[*Exit into the cave.*]

Enter FRACASTRO and LEPARDO.

Fra. Fortune? We must take fortune, as we find her.
If we had wings, as she has, we might soar,
Perchance, beyond her giddy empire. Now
She leads,—nay drives us,—at her will; and we
Seek refuge only in our privilege,
How to abuse her. Where's the signor?

Lep. Yonder,
Girding his sword; now handling of his bow.
He seems more cheerful than of late.

Fra. Last night,
As we were musing near yon moss-crown'd crag,
That throws its giant shadow o'er the vale,
The moon-beams glow'd upon the scene, and threw

A lunar rainbow o'er the robe of night.
 We paused to gaze; and as th' illusive tints
 Faded in air, a melancholy smile
 Play'd o'er his countenance. On which I question'd him.
 "Didst thou not read in those illusive tints,
 "Didst thou not read," said he, "a faithful emblem
 "Of all men's hopes? Mere pageants of a moment!"
 Then he did question me, as if I'd been
 Some wild, usurping, element of power,
 'Twi'x earth and heaven. "Canst thou," said he, "arrest
 "The vivid steps of all-devouring time?
 "Cancel his deeds? command his flight once more
 "Over this tragic, this mysterious, scene;
 "And from his proud dominion pluck the wreaths,
 "Of which his power has robb'd us? If thou canst,
 "Then will I hail thee as a God more just
 "Than Scythia's Woden, or stern Lybian Ammon."

Lep. List; here he comes.

Fra. His smiles have left him. Hail!

Enter ROMANO.

Rom. Hail, my good friends, we greet ye well: good
 morrow.

How hast thou slept?

Fra. Like Morpheus.

Rom. As I live,

The self-same God did send me such a vision,
That now,—e'en now,—my senses thrill with horror.
On this bare earth I laid me down; when, lo!
Cloth'd in the rosy-tinted youth of heaven,
Francesca, bending, beckon'd me. I rose.
Schidoni knelt beside her; and methought,
As I approach'd to spurn him from her feet,
Two serpents curl'd from off his leprosy,
Climb'd up my loins, and seem'd all rife to sting me;
When, at the magic of Francesca's voice,
They dropp'd, all torn and wither'd, at my feet!
I knelt to thank her; when my long-lost daughter
Came towards me, bounding like an antelope.
I flew to meet my little angel; but,
When I'd have clasp'd the treasure to my heart,
She moulder'd—horrid!—bone by bone away,
Into the yawning bosom of the earth.

Fra. Awful, most awful, was thy dream! Yet dreams
Are but the refuse of the brain, which reason
Scorns to make use of.

Rom. Yet it pierced my heart,
Through all its trembling fibres, to the centre.

Enter SARDO, CERELLO (with a hawk upon his wrist) and several officers, from the cave.

Fra. Are ye all ready for the chase?

Cer. We are.

Fra. And morn, more fitted for Diana's sports,
Ne'er flush'd Aurora's eye-lids.

Rom. That's well said.

Fra. Yet I'm no poet, and was ne'er in love;
Though twenty summers have pass'd over me.

Rom. Twenty? These locks—behold! As white, as if
Thrice twenty summers had pass'd over me.

Whereas,

—I speak in sorrow, not in vanity—

I've not yet seen my five-and-thirtieth year!

Will this proud hawk mount cheerfully to-day?

Cer. High as the highest of the Apennines.

Rom. This bird and I are fellow-commoners.
When first I enter'd this deep, winding, quarry,
—'Twas in the dead of night, the moon and stars
Shining in unison,—I beheld him perch'd
On yonder trunk; so deeply drown'd in sleep,
That I approach'd, and seized him on his perch;
Holding his neck and golden talons thus.

We grew familiar day by day ; till I
Made him the partner of my solitude ;
And, teaching him the arts of falconry,
He brought me many a tenant of the air
To grace my board. These, with the fragrant lymph,
Stored by the bees in yonder aged oak,
With roots and fruits, that 'mid these rocks grow wild,
Preserved me oft from starving. Griffin, Griffin !
Excellent bird ! I love thee well. Cerello, take him :
Off with his hood ; and let him drink new courage
From the invigorating breath of morn.

(Calls) Carlo !

Fra. Go, seek him.

Lep. Whither ? he is here.

Enter CARLO and SARDO, equipped for a journey.

Rom. (to CARLO.) Visit my faithful notary at Naples.
Charge him to add as many thousand ducats,
As he has lock'd up safely in my coffers,
To what is offer'd in reward already,
To him, who whispers where my daughter is.
(*Aside.*) The curse of heaven must light upon Schidoni !
The slightest whisper—nay, the slightest hint,—
Let it be paid for, as if all the world

Hung on the context. Art thou ready? Haste—
 Haste, then, good Carlo: but remember this:
 Beware the' assassin—the condemn'd—the' accursed.
 You stare, as if you knew him not—Schidoni!
 Now, sir, forget him if you can. Beware.

Carlo. I'll be as secret as the tomb. [Exit.

Rom. Farewell.

Sardo, come hither. These two letters are
 Burthen'd with matter, worth an emperor's ransom.
 Haste thee to Venice; and deliver this
 To the good doge, my friend and school-compeer.
 Take thou his answer. Thence to Mantua; where,
 When thou hast seen my reverend friend, the bishop,
 —Lately made cardinal, I am told,—and given
 My heart-felt thanks for his kind hope, present
 This letter to Duke Ferdinand, his brother.
 That done—let winds aspire t' outstrip thy course in vain.
 [Exit SARDO.

Fra. Now then, until these messengers return,
 Let us all brace our sinews for the chase.
 I love the forest, where the chamois sips
 The morning dew-drops off the mountain moss.
 I love the precipice, whence the ibex throws
 His hairy form from ridge to hanging steep,

And yet falls harmless on his horns below.
I love the peak, where ancient eagles sit,
Measuring in silence, with undazzled eye,
The shapeless spots that speck meridian suns :
While at their feet their wild, impatient, young
Make the rocks echo with their cries and clamours.

Rom. Such was the picture, each returning spring,
On the lone peaks, that screen'd my father's castle
From the gigantic fury of the storms,
That rule sublime the Adriatic waste.
Sweet were the days and honours of my youth!
Glens, forests, cliffs, high mountains, and the ocean,
Then had their graces and sublimities.
Now, e'en the magic of the rising sun,
—Sublimest image of eternal glory!—
Colours yon clouds with golden tints in vain.
But come—we'll give all sorrow to the winds.
Rocks, cliffs, and glens, shall answer to our shouts ;
Till Hesper, glittering in the vault of heaven,
Shall give rich promise for the morrow's dawn.

[*Approaches the statue.*

Fra. (aside.) The charge sits heavy on his labouring
soul!

Rom. (to the statue.) Shed thou no tear, that I should
leave thee thus!

Should I return to these rude rocks no more,
To breathe new life and power into thy veins,
Thou shalt o'er many a lofty mountain traverse
My woes to soothe. Enchanting form,—farewell!

[*Exit. Officers follow.*]

Fra. (solus.) The charge, I say, sits heavy on his soul;
Both night and day. If innocent, why sad
To this extent?—My mother's brother!—yet
Condemn'd for murder. Oh most foul, most foul!
I was a boy, when this is said to have happen'd;
And all my youth since has been pass'd in Cyprus,
Of which my sire was governor. Ah well,
Surpassing well, they died before this charge
Palsied our house. They left me to the care
Of our good doge, who sends me here to promise
Power and protection to the best,—or worst,
Of all men living. I've heard strange reports;
And well-attested, too; but since—

Rom. (without.) Fracastro!

Fra. But since my master tells me, that—

Rom. (without.) Fracastro!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

A Parterre, contiguous to SCHIDONI's mansion; four leagues from Naples. An alcove at the farther end.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. This is the spot; and yonder is the mansion.
Never lived one, more odious than its master.
Hatred and infame breathe upon his name.
Only one, solitary, virtue has he:
Love to his mother's memory. All Naples
—Court, palace, castle, church, change, mansion, cot,—
All stand in awe of him: while he, obsequious,
Winds round the judgment of the king; and makes him
Do and undo, believe and disbelieve,
Just what he pleases. It is wonderful!
Strange, too, it is;—at least I have been told so;
That he can never hear the name, Romano,
But his lips quiver, and his cheeks turn pale.
There must be some strange reason for all this.
One day, perchance, the sinner may turn saint;
As dolphins change their colour, ere they die,
And after they are dead. All hail, good madam!
Theresa at the casement! I shall now

Learn if the fair Lavinia sleeps within.

Some one approaches : I must hide myself.

Perchance ;—it is ;—it is the fiend himself. [Exit.

Enter SCHIDONI.

Schid. I thought I saw a shadow move this way.

'Twas a delusion, I suppose. There is none.

Now we shall see what virtue is in woman.

Theresa tells me, I'm too sudden. Well ;

Let me then read Velutri's scroll once more.

" I found Fontano sitting at the casement ; and stealing close behind, I threw the dust you gave me full into his eyes. The groan he utter'd ! I would not hear another such for all the wealth you have. Then I led him into the waste, but could not lead him to a precipice, as you commanded. But seeing a boy, I gave him a ducat, and charged him to do so : and with this I hope you will be satisfied. Not even Romano would desire more."

Exquisite fool ! Read lessons to thy master ?

Satisfied ? what—with half the deed perform'd ?

The boy will pity him, no doubt. The fool !

Exquisite fool ! Yet let me pause ; perchance

Death to Fontano were a benefit.

For death is peace. Then let him live; and crawl
A ruin'd outcast to the end of time.

Refuse a daughter to a man like me?

Tut;—he's a fool:—I'm satisfied;—he little,

Ah little dreams he, that the friend, he chose,

To guide his daughter to St. Catherine's convent,

Bribed high by me, convey'd the treasure here.

Now were I happier, than the happiest man,

That e'er breath'd rapture in Parthenope,

Did not the memory of Romano's wife,

—The only woman that I ever loved,—

Cursed recollection! poison half my joy.

List—the door opens. As I live, 'tis she!

Herself;—Lavinia! Every step breathes music.

Here, 'mid these shrubs, I'll hide me; till Theresa,

Ugly old hag! shall think it meet to leave her.

Enter LAVINIA and THERESA.

Lav. Music, nor painting, poësy, nor prayer,

Have power to soothe my agony one moment.

For what sad purpose am I hither brought?

My father gave me to the care of Paulo,

With strictest charge to guide me safe to Venice.

But scarce three leagues had we been travelling, when

He turn'd into a forest. Then he led me
 Through the lone windings of a pathless glen,
 Re-echoing with hoarse cataracts; and came,
 As well thou know'st, at dreary midnight, to
 This silent, solitary mansion. Wherefore
 Am I brought hither?

The. When the signor comes—

Lav. Is it Romano, or Schidoni? say—

Would I were sleeping in St. Catherine's convent,
 Shrouded in silence, near my sacred mother!

Oh my dear father! oh my dearest father!

Robb'd of thy sight? Theresa, are you sure,

Lorenzo did inform you, that it was so?

Sure 'tis some tale, some wandering rumour. Nay,

'Tis but too true; your countenance betrays it.

Heav'n, look you there. A man,—a man! who is it?

Gracious! I'm petrified. Schidoni! Hide me:

Hide me—oh hide me. I am lost: nay stay:

Theresa!—stay. If you go hence, I perish.

Schid. Hence, mistress, hence. I'll speak to thee
 anon.

The. Sir, I am going: use the lady gently.

Nay, sir; I'm not accustom'd to such looks,

For merely saying, use the lady gently.

Schid. Hence, hence, old harridan.

The. (*aside.*) I'll not remain
In this house longer. [*Exit.*]

Schid. Get you gone: so ho—
Gone? and no reverence. Insolent old hag!

Lav. Then, sir, I'll take my safety on myself.

Schid. Wherefore so haughty? Did I love thee less,
Ill should I brook such dignified returns.
I call the sainted spirits to be witness—

Lav. Frightful, oh frightful! To invoke the saints
To witness falsehood. Thou most cruel man—
Who quench'd my father's eye-balls? Thou;—thou;—
thou!

Schid. Not so:—Velutri. I?—Schidoni?—I?
Why wrong me thus? I love thee, heavenly maid.
I loved thy father also:—but he hated,
(Wherefore I know not;) he insulted me.
Who did not love him for his gentleness?
No term in language suited him but one;
And that one, *gentilezza*. If I could,
Yes, if I could have imitated any,
His was the model, I'd have copied.

Lav. You?

Schid. Nay, my Lavinia, do, I charge, dismiss

Doubts of my sacred honour, which ne'er yet,
 E'en by the venom of a slanderer's tongue,
 Has once been breath'd on.

Lav. I 'm the slanderer then!

Schid. Nay, my sweet maid; nay, this is past endurance.

Lav. If I could smile at such a time as this,
 Yours were a mask for my derision. You?
 The very scorn and pestilence of the times!

Schid. (*aside.*) I shall remember thee!

Lav. You always were
 A deadly enemy to my father:—always.

Schid. Dreams—fancies—visions!

Lav. Not Romano's self—

Schid. Curst be the name; and thou for using it. I
 vow—

Lav. Were but Lorenzo—

Schi. Excellent! Lorenzo?

Hear, hear, ye guardians in the court of love,
 Lorenzo is the fair Lavinia's idol!
 Leave him, fair lady; leave him; he is worthless.

Lav. Slander—mere slander; thou unworthy man!
 He is all honour; full of noblest thoughts;
 And in all true nobility of heart
 Eclipses thee, as much as thou in turn

Eclipsest all the lofty poet dreams,
 When, in his flight, he paints, in monstrous shape,
 A fiend more horrid, than our eyes can look on.

Schid. Why all this anger?

Lav. Touch me not;—unhand me.

Schid. Vain are all prayers and imprecations;—vain!

Lav. Away, thou monster: thou Romano—hence!

Schid. (aside.) I'd rather meet a legion of foul Gorgons,
 Arm'd all with torches, snakes, and hideous serpents,
 Than hear the name of that detested man,
 At such a time as this. Thou shalt not go.

She palsies me!—thou Jezebel!—she palsies me!

Lav. Unhand me, heartless villain, as thou art.

Schid. Fled, as I live. Theresa! here—Theresa!
 Nay,—who is this? Lorenzo; or mine eyes
 Paint objects yellow. Would he were in hell!

Enter LORENZO.

How dost thou do? Thou'rt welcome to my mansion.
 Up with thy sword. She's not worth fighting for;
 A proud, vain, Jezebel. Thy hand—

Lor. Stand off!

I know thee well. No glossing words with me.
 Stand off! I'll not waste words upon a villain.

Schid. Nor I waste words upon a fool. A fool
Is one, who, with a voluntary spirit,
Unsheathes his sword in any woman's cause,
Angel or devil. She is mine : but sooner
Than I would draw a sword in her behalf,
She's yours, or any man's.

Lor. The matchless dastard!

Schid. Words are but wind, when speaking of a woman.

Lor. Draw, sir.

Schid. I shall.—Lorenzo, as I live!

Now, sir—the folly! now, perhaps, this sword
Can show, I'm not more easily o'erthrown,
Than the thrice-brave and elegant Lorenzo.
Nay, nay—fight slow. Don't be in such a fury.
Thou'rt like an Arab, just let loose from mosque.

Lor. And thou like fiend, escaped from lowest hell :
Worse than Romano, whom you charged with murder.

Schid. Curse thee for that! I'll punish thee, be sure.

[*Excunt.*

BOOK II.

SCENE I.

Piazas near the King's Palace.

VELUTRI, *walking to and fro in great agitation.*

Vel. The groan he utter'd! As I hope for grace,
I would not hear another such for all
The universe contains. I left him. If the boy
Take pity, it is well. The ducats? Dust!
Not all the wealth of Italy or Spain,
Egypt or India—Would, that I had died!
What though I was beset with ills around;
Steep'd in the gulf of every deep distress;
And my loved infants famishing with want.
Better,—far better,—they had pined, till death
Had lull'd their anguish to forgetfulness,
Than that their father should allay their wants
In banquets, purchased at a rate so dear.
Out on the ducats! I will perish rather
Than touch one counter. Oh my dearest babes!

How will ye meet the' averted eyes of scorn,
With which the world will visit ye? I suspect
Another crime, another secret crime,
Even more vile and horrible than this.
I'll to the king—the only solace left!
I'll to the king, confess my crime, and perish. [Exit.

SCENE II.

FONTANO (*blind*); *sitting among precipices, down which are scattered several crosses*: FLORANTHE (*in the habit of a boy*) *standing at his feet.*

Fon. Are not these jarring sounds the screams of eagles?

Flor. I think they are: indeed I'm sure they are. This seems to be the land of eagles; and of chamois too; for I never saw such a multitude in all my life. Just by the roots of that old tree, signor, are more than ten or twelve, drinking round a spring. Oh—how I should like to be a chamois! Yet no; I should not like to be a

chamois either; for I now see four or five eagles flying over their heads. Should you not like to be an eagle, signor? I should; more than any thing else in the world; for then I could fly above the clouds. Stop—I should not like to be an eagle either; for then I might be killed by the thunder and lightning.

(*Sings.*)

Wild is the chamois, that drinks at the fountain,
 Which winds down the glen a soft bubbling rill;
 Wild is the eagle, that flies o'er the mountain;
 Wild is the tempest, that wanders at will.
 But a foot-path like mine,
 And a fate such as thine,
 Are wilder, more rough, and more fortune-less still.

Fon. Where learnt you that? It suits my sorrows well.

Flo. (*sings.*)

Sweet are the sun-beams, the forest illuming,
 Which from the hard rind a soft honey distil;
 Sweet is the lily the valley perfuming;
 Sweet is the sound of the murmuring mill.
 But a service like mine;
 And thanks such as thine;
 Are sweeter, more grateful; more fortunate still!

Fon. Thanks, my dear boy: thou dost assuage my pain.

Flo. Now, signor, rise ; and take this hand ; we shall soon get to the bottom. What a cruel deed it was, signor, to rob you of your sight ; and then to leave you among such horrid precipices as these.

Fon. Almost beyond man's cruelty. Take heed. Careful,—my child : nay, do not loose my hand. Now lead again ; I trust to heaven and thee.

Flo. And heaven shall fail thee, signor, sooner than I will. Oh me ! I'm glad enough we've got to the bottom at last.

Fon. Have we so ? Lead me, then, I charge, to Venice.

There I'll repay thee for thy friendship towards me.

Flo. Venice ? The very place I want to visit myself.

Fon. Thither Lavinia has arrived ; or Paulo Creeps like a glow-worm o'er the midnight leaf.

(*Aside.*) Alas—with me, 'tis all one midnight ; cheer'd With not one ray, but that which shines from this Young, cheerful, arch, yet mild and delicate boy, To guide me safely to my daughter's arms.

Flo. The signor, who told me to lead thee to the edge of a precipice, and leave thee there, gave me a ducat. So we are rich persons. When we have spent all this, signor ; may I exercise my profession ?

Fon. And what is that, my noble-minded boy?

Flo. Boy? (*Aside*) True;—I shall forget myself. The Virgin has given me a strange gift, signor. She has taught me the art of an improvisatrice; I mean, an improvisatore. So, if I see a rich cavalier, riding on the road, this is the way I shall begin, perhaps.

Stop, signor, stop; and, if you can,
Relieve this poor, ill-fated man.
For he was once devoutly kind;
Though now he's indigent and blind.
Then stop, good signor; stop, I pray;
Let fall a ducat in our way,
And Heaven, no doubt, will bless your hopes to-day.

Fon. Thou richest mirror of a noble heart,
What court contains a splendid soul, like thine?

Flo. Come, signor; this is the way: do not be afraid.

These rocks so high, these paths so rough,
Are desert, waste, and wild enough,
To strike our hearts with dread.
But let me, signor, move before.
There,—take this hand, and grieve no more;
For Heaven, from this day forth, will pour
Rich blessings on thy head.

Fon. To grant a guide, so faithful, was indeed
To grant a treasure, which I ne'er could hope
In this most weary pilgrimage. Proceed.

Hard fate! hard fortune! never to behold
 Tree, flower, nor streamlet; sun, nor moon, nor stars;
 My native mountains; nor the sacred form
 Of her I love: my daughter. Never shall I see
 My faithful daughter, my sweet blooming daughter!
 Oh, my dear boy, it is a bitterness
 Beyond the measure of a parent's strength!

Flo.

Yet do not sigh, my reverend lord.
 What says the Virgin's sacred word?
 That every sigh, unjustly riven,
 Is enter'd in the book of Heaven.
 Oft, too, I've heard my mother say,
 The time will come, oh blissful day!
 When sighs and tears are wiped away.

Fon. Surely this earth has never yet beheld
 A being like thee. Thanks, my boy; I thank thee.
 Young as thou art, thou hast pour'd balm and oil
 Into my wounds.

Flo. The path is better now.

Fon. But stay:—Romano's camp, if I mistake not,
 Lies towards the west. So, lead me northward, boy.

Flo. But who erected all these crosses, signor?

Fon. Pilgrims and travellers; in gratitude,
 For having pass'd these dangerous rocks in safety.

Take this small crucifix; and plant it where
The pious pilgrim may behold and worship.

Flo. (taking the crucifix.) I must add something. Oh!
The chain, that fastens this dear portrait round my neck.
Heaven gives us all things; therefore, we should give,
in return, not what is of little, but that which is of great,
value. I shall, therefore, leave this chain.

Fon. What chain?

Flo. Nine years ago, signor, a dark ill-looking man
took me from my father's house, in some great town; I
know not where: and after some time travelling, threw
me on the lap of an old woman, named Theresa, who
lives in a large house, not above two or three leagues
from this very spot.

Fon. Thou hast been wrong'd, I fear, and much. Go on.

Flo. A few days since, signor, a young lady came to
that mansion; and, immediately on her coming, Theresa
came into the garden, where I was sitting, and told me
to be gone; and get my living as well as I could. Be-
fore I went, however, she tied this portrait round my
neck, and bade me wear it. "It came with you, child,"
said she, "and may, one day, do service: for it may
lead to thy father and mother. I found it tied in thy

bosom: and the signor knows nothing whatever about it."

Fon. Who is the signor, whom she mentioned, boy?

Flo. Ah! that I could never learn. On that subject old Theresa was as close as a flower, hid in a bud. Now I shall hang the chain upon the crucifix.

Fon. Guard, that you fall not down a precipice.

Flo. Ah! now, signor, if you could but see how beautifully those clouds roll away in the distance, I am sure you would be delighted. On that side, we have a view of Naples; on the other, Salerno, its woods, rocks, and castle; below is the gulf; and farther on is the wide, wide ocean. Oh, how I do wish, signor, that I had genius enough to be a landscape-painter!

Fon. (*aside.*) There is in this sweet, fascinating, boy,
More life, soul, genius, than in half of those,
Who bathe, unbidden, in the sacred stream,
That swells the bosom of mount Helicon.

Flo. Merciful! Here comes a large body of hunters, carrying dead chamois, ibexes, birds, and I know not what beside. Let us get out of their way as fast as we can. Oh me! that horn sounds louder than a trumpet. Come. [*Exeunt.*

Enter FRACASTRO bearing the hawk, LEPARDO, CERELLO, MARCO, &c.

Fra. Put down the birds, the ibex, and the chamois.

Lep. Why lags the signor?

Marco. He's not form'd for hunting.

Fra. Sit, my good friends; the morn is sultry; sit.

Aurora sheds roses, and whispers a song.

"Be early, be active, be daring, be strong;

"The chamois and ibex bound over the snow,

"Start, start, and pursue them, wherever they go.

Lep. I do believe, Marco, that if our friend Fracastro were hard put to it, he could make a poem out of a pig's foot.

Fra. Well, Griffin-grooven! thou didst mount to-day,
Like a crown'd eagle from his native quarry.
Thou art a favourite with us all, good Griffin.
That's a good bird! (*strokes it.*) He seems all life. Is
not

This hood too close upon his lids, Cerello?

Cer. Yes; yes; it is. Come hither, Griffin-grooven.

Fra. Take him, and see the hood offends him not.
He's an old servant; therefore should be cherish'd.

Cer. Go, hawk; go, hawk. You mounted well to-day.
Good boy; good boy; thou art the prince of hawks.

Fra. Give him some food; and take him to his perch.
I saw, just now, full forty chamois; all
Feeding in flocks. One saw me, and hiss'd sharply,
With note, loud deepening towards its close. Then,
stamp'd,
And hiss'd again. On which the forest echoed;
And every chamois bounded from its mate,
Like balls, rebounding on an unhewn surface.

Lep. Here comes the signor. Talk no more of chamois.

*Enter ROMANO, clad in a loose hunting dress, bearing
his quiver; and with his bow unstrung, hanging across
his shoulders. As he passes, he distributes his arrows.*

Rom. My arrows gone;—I hawk and hunt no more.
Five days we've given to the Apennines,
Mid cliffs, high towering; while the clouds beneath
Roll'd in white volumes; and the mountains rung
With many an air-struck avalanche. The folly!
Unstring thy bow; and thou—and thou—and thou.
Take my bow, Marco. Bend it; break it. Nay,
Canst thou not do it? Let Lepardo try.
Nor he?—Fracastro. None of ye? Let me.

Sure I can break, if I can bend it;—done.
Thus will I break mine enemies in twain;
And hurl their parting fragments to the winds,
As I this bow.

If, in disdain, I draw this three-edged sword,
Thus, and then thus;—what ramparts have I outlived?

Fra. Naples.

Rom. Thou 'rt right: and ere the full-orb'd moon
Has waned into a melancholy crescent,
Naples shall be like Nineveh;—a desert.
Wait, my good friends. A word with thee, Fracastro.
Sometimes I feel all paralyzed. My reason
Melts into dreary visions and delusions.
Clouds, mists, and tempests shield me from the past,
And doubts and fears make mystery of the present.
I gaze on heaven, the earth beneath my feet,
Yon hoary mountains, and yon distant ocean.
What seem they all? mere vapours! As I live,
This is an error of the mind. Perchance
More than an error. Tell me, for I know
Thou hast, though young, a most discerning spirit,
Dost thou perceive aught in me, that from man
Ought to be banished?

Fra.

Signor?

Rom. If thou dost,
 Tell me. I do not mean this moment. But
 When I do brood, as sometimes I am wont,
 Too deeply o'er my sorrows. Thou'rt my friend.
 To hear the worst I fear not. Speak, then; speak;
 And like a man, who venerates full well
 That sacred, persecuted, saint—the truth.
 Hast thou observed it? Stay! you need not speak:
 Looks are more eloquent than words. Hast ever
 Heard my lorn history?

Fra. I have.

Rom. Thou hast?
 When? where?

Fra. At Venice.

Rom. And the true one?

Fra. That
 I cannot answer for: since truth and untruth
 Oft are so blended,—in one sentence too,—
 That what seems truth is nothing but a falsehood;
 And what seems false is all, indeed, the truth:
 Their dress being changed. A laugh, a smile, a whisper—

Rom. Oh ye great gods! that men should speak in
 whispers!

Mark, my young friend; I charge thee, mark, Fracastro.

A man, that's honest, never speaks in whispers.
Why should men whisper, when they speak the truth?
Envy and jealousy, hatred and revenge,
—Clothed in deceit, hypocrisy, and craft,—
Seek ignominious safety in a—whisper!
But noble souls disdain such hangman safety.
They—are you silent?—Truth, I say, disdains
All hoods; all bonnets; all extinguishers
Of manly virtue. When you speak, speak out;
And let the unvarnish'd front of Heaven's impress
Bear honest witness to an honest deed.
Who slew my lovely angel as she slept?
That is the point on which all mystery hangs.

Fra. Horrid, most horrid, was the deed.

Rom.

Oh hell!

Oh me!—what safety have I left? On whom
Can I repose in safety, if a doubt
Lurks in the bosom of the dearest friend,
I have on earth?

Fra. Thou dost mistake my meaning.

I said 't was horrid. I express'd no doubt.

Rom. Thy hand. I'm hasty; but I'm innocent.

Oh, if ye knew mine agony of soul!—

Truth, truth:—fear nought. Still dumb? Speak out.

Ye silent too? what, all? By Heaven, they're dumb,
And think me guilty still. Open, oh earth!
Open and bury me! Of all men living——

Fra. Why rend thy mantle thus from top to bottom?
We were not silent from suspicion. Yet
How can we know—?—what secret magic have we,
On which to swear thine innocence? We hope,—
We hold thee innocent: but we cannot swear it.

Rom. Too well, too well, I know ye cannot. That
Makes me so sensitive. If ye knew beyond
My grave assertion, my rack'd soul were tranquil,
E'en as Arabian midnights; when rich odours
Waft o'er the deep, and lull the waves to slumber.
That—it is that, which makes my heart so sore.
I feel all guilt; because ye cannot know,
Whether I'm bathed in innocence or no.
But did ye know the wrongs I have endured,
The cruel insults, heap'd upon my name,
The depth of anguish, which subdues my soul,
And wrings my heart; yes—warriors as ye are—
Did ye but know,—your hearts would melt in pity;
And tears, soft tears, would gem your generous eye-
lids.

Nay—e'en the rocks, on which ye are now standing,

Would almost bend in sympathy. Ye Powers,
Who scan and scrutinize the hearts of men—

Fra. We feel, thou'rt wrong'd beyond all human
strength.

Our dukes, our senates, all believe thee so;
Or we had never, never quitted Venice,
Rome, Genoa, Mantua, and Otranto,
To promise thee assistance and revenge.

Lep. And those thou shalt have, if the gods be just.

Rom. Yon glorious firmament—behold! It spreads
In one vast arch of azure; mild, transparent,
Pure, and magnificent:—an emblem sacred
Of man's first virtue—gratitude! Though now
All steel, all granite, to my foes; yet once
All heart I was, all life, all soul. To friends
Plastic; to enemies—I knew none.
Now 'tis far different. I am charged with murder,
Not of an enemy, a deadly enemy;
But,—'tis beyond all human language!—of
My wife, all beautiful! my hope; the sum
Of life and excellence; my paradise.
As a fond mother draws her mantle round
Her sleeping infant; clasps him to her breast;
And hangs, delighted, o'er his smiling lips:
So o'er the lineaments of her, now laid

In death's dark cell, Imagination hangs
Entranced, enamoured,—nay, enraptured ! Yet
In some men's wild, horrific, estimation,
I am more savage than the pest, that drops
Hard, putrid, tears amid the reeds of Nile :
More harsh, more cruel, than Caucasian bear,
Riphean tiger, or fork'd Libyan serpent.
Say—stand I thus ? Or like some hoary peak,
Which peers, gigantic, mid dark rolling clouds,
Surcharged with thunder and th' electric fluid,
O'er the vast solitudes of th' antarctic zone,
Careless, and reckless, of the piercing shrieks,
Which o'er the bosom of the boisterous main
Waft many a league ; and tell to distant lands
The awful agony of some ruin'd crew,
Whelm'd in wild eddies down the angry deep ?
Am I all this ? Am I shrewd, cunning, heartless ?
Am I regardless of another's woe ?
Can I look friendship, smile, and yet—betray ?
Can I, with manna, mix some deadly poison,
Which shall consume the vitals of the mind,
And thrust a deeper agony in the soul,
Than e'er was thrust on human heart before ?
If I can meditate, and act, all this ;
Then am I guilty of my wife's foul murder.

Have I, in fact, the lineaments of man ?

I have ? 'tis well ! Yon battlements are those
Of that soft, cruel, and luxurious wanton,
Naples the curst.

Yes—though an outcast, a condemn'd, scorn'd, outcast,—
I will reduce her palaces, her walls,
Her towers, her arsenals, and all
Those sea-girt ships, that crowd her azure bay,
To dust so small, that e'en a summer's breeze
May waft them o'er Vesuvius. Fracastro,

[*Taking him aside.*]

In this vile frame dwell two contrasted spirits.
One, like the palm-tree, which defies the storm ;
The other, trembling, like the feather'd reed,
Which bends obsequious to each passing touch.
This woos the skies ; that clings to parent earth ;
And each rules absolute, when the other sleeps.
I have a silent, unexampled sorrow
Gnawing this bosom like a vulture. Shall
I yield, or conquer ? I've a strange temptation.
Say, say ; which shall I ? Thrust this dagger deep
Into my heart, and end my woes at once ;
Or live a monument for the world's loud laugh ?

Fra. The laugh of worldlings and the scoff of fools

Are far beyond a wise man's notice. Live !
Live here ; live here ;—that thou mayst live hereafter.

Rom. (aside.) I was a fool to ask him such a question.
Has he been wrongfully accused? Has he
Lost, ever lost, a wife, on whom he doted?
Has he e'er felt the agony of having
A fair, mild, innocent, and blooming daughter,
Torn from his arms, and never heard of after?
How, then, can he appreciate the pangs
Of one so paralyzed? Impossible !

Fra. What have we here? a crucifix!—a chain!

Lep. Some traveller's debt of gratitude, no doubt.

Fra. He was no hypocrite, that placed it here:
For 'tis of gold.

Rom. Nay, touch it not: 'tis holy.
Replace it on the crucifix; and yet—
What do I see? I pray thee, hold this helmet.
This golden chain resembles one, which I
Gave to Francesca, on the morn we married.
A strange resemblance! Take it once again;
And place it on the crucifix. Yet stay—
It is, I know, a sacrilege to take it;
Yet shall this bosom be the crucifix,

On which its venerated links shall hang.

Help me to place it round my neck.

Fra. I will.

There;—and may hope, and liberty, and love

Bud in the links, and blossom on thy bosom.

Rom. Nature, be sure, design'd thee for a poet.

Fra. Ay? Dost thou think so? No! I wear rich
garments.

My face,—at least the ladies tell me so,—

Is round and healthy—nay—the fair ones smile,

When I look smilingly on them. Will they

Smile on a poet? Never!

Lep. Yes, they will.

Let him but swear, by all the gods above,

Their beauty shines more lovely than the morn;

They'll smile, I warrant them.

Fra. No, no;—no, no!

Why, sir, a poet is all haggard, wan.

Yet I would be a poet, if I could.

Now, if I am a poet, I can turn

Each rough and unhewn stone into a gem;

And see a likeness where the world sees none.

Now, let me try. A subject? Stop:—I see one.

Yon stream reminds me of man's varied course,

From childhood, youth, and manhood, to old age.
At first, a fountain in earth's mossy lap ;
A streamlet next, through wild Arcadian scenes,
Winding, through flowers, its fascinating way.
Now through vast plains, and continents of shade,
It rolls in many a wild and broken wave ;
And next through empires, choked with drifting sand.
Lo ! on a sudden, cliffs and mountains rise,
Belted with storms. Insinuating winds
The flood mature. The stubborn rocks give way.
Down the hoar precipice, unterrified,
The wild waves rush ; the woods, remote, resound ;
And mountains echo back the deafening roar.
Escaped the agitated whirlpool's reign,
Beneath deep shades, where bees secrete their wealth,
And mild dove-turtles build their hallow'd nests,
It issues wide ; and rolling calmly down
The Earth's vast surface, weds, in one proud flood,
Th' attracting majesty of the boundless main.

Rom. Nay, now, I'll swear thou art a poet.—

Enter CARLO.

Joy !

She's found,—she's found ! Where is she ? who ? say who

Found my delight;—my little charmer? where?
 I saw thee clasp thine arms together thus.
 When shall I clasp my little angel? when?
 What is the matter? speak; I charge thee, speak.
 Nay, do not curb thy lips together so;
 But speak at once. You freeze my blood! nay, speak.
 Art thou a father, yet delay in telling,
 Whether my child, my long-lost, innocent, child,
 Is, or is not, discover'd? Carlo! speak.

Carlo. My journey has proved fruitless!

Rom. Then the earth,
 Nay, e'en the universe itself, to me
 Is but a sterile, useless, parch'd-up, desert.

Carlo. Yet I've strange news to tell thee of:—a deed—

Rom. Does it concern my daughter?

Carlo. No: Fontano.

Rom. Then I've no ears to listen. I had hoped—
 Ah me—what pyramids of hope does Fancy
 Build in the dreary deserts of misfortune,
 Wherewith to mock the mourner! I had hoped—

Carlo. Wilt thou not hear what has befallen Fontano?

Rom. Some other time; some other time, I tell thee.
 Nay—I'll hear now:—an honourable man!

What of Fontano? Oh my dearest child!
 Hear thou, Fracastro, what he has to say,
 And tell me afterwards. You saw Clemento?
 What did he say? Nay—all is useless. Well—
 What has befall'n Fontano? Nay, you need,
 Now you have told me what no man can bear
 With a firm countenance—you need not pause.

Carlo. Blind!

Rom. What, Fontano? oh the grace of Heaven!
 When was he struck? the excellent old man!
 Where was he when this accident befell him?
 Say—was he walking in the fields? at home?
 Was he at church? Alas, how many an hour
 Have he and I sat listening to the harp
 Of my poor murdered sposa!

Carlo. Not the hand
 Of Heaven, or justice, did the deed: But one—

Rom. Only one man in Naples could be found
 To do a deed like that. Schidoni! He,
 He was the man; and no one else. Not one
 In all the city could be found—

Carlo. 'T was he.
 At least he bribed another to the deed;

Who, when 't was done, at dead of midnight, led
The sightless man, amid this wilderness.

Rom. Did he? go seek him; you, Lepardo, you.
Convey my sacred sympathy; and incite
The injured man to take revenge with us.

[*Exit* LEPARDO.]

Oh, my dear daughter! oh my dearest child!
I'll have revenge:—and thou, Fontano, too,
Shalt have revenge, deep, dark, and deadly. Ere
Another moon attracts another tide,
We'll bind Schidoni in his own vile chains,
And lay yon glittering palaces in ruins.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A thatched cottage, situate in a small garden on the
lower ledge of a deep cataract.*

A Fisherman and his Wife spreading their nets.

SCHIDONI sitting in the sun, dressing his wounds.

Schid. Now I do miss th' affection of my mother.
Were she still living, she would bind these wounds;

And never ask me, if I frown'd, "how came they?"

She was all love, all innocence; and I——

[*The Fisherman and his Wife sit down near each other; and begin mending their nets.*]

These people, too, seem innocence; and yet,

I dare be sworn, 'tis all in seeming;—all!

This scene is what the silly world would call

Rural felicity. I make no doubt,

'Tis such felicity, as—the gods might envy!

That men should be such idiots as to marry,

Excites my wonder. Bernardine; come hither.

The air breathes autumn; are you cold? 'Tis winter.

Fisherman. Cold, signor? no. I'm rather warm than otherwise. But I'm glad to see thee out again. When I took thee out of the water, brought thee home, and told my wife to take care of thee, I never thought thee could get up again. But thee have; and that sooner, I warrant, than if a doctor had netted thee.

Schid. You are my saviour. Here: one, two, three, Nay, nay, three more gold sequins. Are you paid?

Fisherman. I wants no payment, signor;—but I thank thee, nevertheless. Six gold sequins haven't been in my pocket for many a day. There—spawn in my pocket, and grow into fishes of gold:—there's good children.

Schid. Hast ever travell'd from this straw-roof'd cot?

Fisherman. Travell'd? no, signor; not much. But I goes once or twice every week to Naples, to sell the fish, I catch in my nets there.

Schid. Set off, this instant, since you know the way. At No. 10, Street Ferdinand, there lives
A person named Velutri;—give him this.

(*Aside*) I must give reasons wherefore I return not.
Mind:—No. 10, Street Ferdinand. I've told him,
To give thee fifteen florins for this journey.

Fisherman. I'll set off this moment, signor. I'll be back before thee can think I've been there. I'll just step in to get my best coat, and tell my fish-dried old woman where I be going.

Schid. Never mind her. Set off this moment: Haste.

Fisherman. God bless you, signor; I would not set off without telling my wife for all the world. The sequins would burn a hole in my pocket, and a large one too. They would, signor, as sure as old Dominic looks over Naples. Wife, coom hither; and get my best coat. Look here. Look thee here.

Wife. O gemini me! where got you them? Gold, as I hope to be saved. Do you think I'll wear such a ragged old petticoat as this? no, let it go to the fishes.

(*Throws it into the water.*) There—eat it up. Nay, now you are a good-tempered old man; the best-tempered old man, I ever saw in my life. Great coat? Ay to be sure. Come in, Bernardine. I'll get your coat, and brush it too, boy, into the bargain.

[*Exeunt.*]

Schid. If this is not all innocence,—what is? Money's the touchstone. Yet, I must confess, He saved me first; and did not wait to know, Whether reward would visit him or not. And yet, for what good purpose am I saved? Lorenzo victor, I'm disgraced for ever. I shall be hooted, ridiculed, despised. I am a hasty, headstrong, blundering, fool; The veriest fool and guillemot, that lives!

[*Re-enter Fisherman: his Wife following.*]

Fisherman. With the blessing of God, signor, I hope to be home before twelve of the sun, to-morrow.

Schid. With the blessing of whom?

Fisherman. With the blessing of God, signor. We can do nothing good without his blessing.

Schid. Do you think so?

Fisherman. Think so, signor? why, I am sure of it. And they that do not think so, too, signor; why, they

may be very clever sort of people as far as I knows;
they can conjure three fishes perhaps into four; but to
tell you the truth, signor, I would not trust them from
one end of my net to the other. [Exit.

Schid. Set off; despatch. Dame Margery, bring me
hither

My sword and poniard. I must say, good morrow.

[Exit Wife.

These wounds are painful; but I thank dame Fortune,
They are not mortal. Mortal is the body;
Mortal the mind. Yet monks,—sweet saints!—and
bishops,

Old men, old women, hermits, and the—pope!
All would persuade us, wherefore all can tell,
—To fill their cellars, butteries, and store-rooms,—
That souls shall live in happiness or pain,
Till three times twenty shall make ninety-one.
That is, for ever. Some do,—ay!—believe it;
From education, ignorance, or fear.
Fear is their god. Fear nothing is my creed;
But to be thwarted in an intended deed.

[Re-enter Fisherman's Wife.

Thank thee, dame Margery. Let me buckle on
This oft-tried sword. This dagger, too, (*aside*)—all
poison'd!

Had I but thought of thee, Lorenzo had
 Paid a sure forfeit. Thanks, my honest dame.
 Good day; I thank thee for thy kind assistance. [*Exit.*]

Wife. Good day, signor; you 're welcome; though I
 do not like thee. My husband saved thee; but he did
 not know thee: and if I may speak my mind, when
 nobody hears, I think it was a pity. He might as
 well have left thee to the fishes. No, no; not that;
 for if he had, we should never have had six gold se-
 quins. (*Calling*) Good day, signor;—good day! and
 may you fall in the water every day in the year. That
 is, if my Bernardine is there to pick you up.

[*Exit into the cottage.*]

SCENE IV.

A forest; on the west side, a fountain.

Time;—Twilight.

Enter LAVINIA.

Lav. These rocks and stones distract my labouring feet.
 Which is my way to Venice, through this forest,
 Deep, dark, and awful; echoing with a roar,

Like the loud tumults of the Caspian main,
Alas! I know not. Yon resounding cataract
Strikes me with dread: I dare proceed no farther.
Parch'd too with thirst! A fountain? Be my cup
The wrinkled hollow of my hand. How sweet!
Emblem—all eloquent—of the Christian's hope.
Oh what a sacred and enchanting walk,
In hope's sweet garden, does the pilgrim take;
When, as he winds along the sultry waste,
Girt with all horrors; where the serpent coils,
The adder hisses, and the lion prowls;
His soul seeks solace in the secret hope,
That every tear, he sheds upon his journey,
Flows to the fountain of eternal life!

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Which way, she fled, seems magic. I have
search'd

A thousand thickets and a thousand caves,
Amid these deep recesses; but can find
No traces of her footsteps. I'm bewilder'd;
And know not whither to direct my steps.
I met two stately stags amid the forest;
And heard two doves coo vespers with their young.

Lav. Oh—my dear father—oh my dearest father!

Lor. Whence are these sounds? By all the saints—
(*calls*)—Lavinia!

Lav. Who? whence? a dream—a vision—my Lorenzo!

Lor. Now am I blest beyond the reach of thought.
It is Lavinia; 'tis my own Lavinia!

Lav. I have no power, Lorenzo—

Lor. I have sought thee,
Till my lorn heart sunk spiritless. I fear'd,
When I had saved thee from Schidoni, that—

Lav. You! was it you, who saved me from Schidoni?
Then you are wounded. Yes—I feel you are.
Where is the wound? Stay—let me bind it. Where?
Where is it?

Lor. Thanks to Fortune, I have none.

Lav. That is delightful; that is joy indeed.
But where's Schidoni?

Lor. As we fought, we came
To the loose margin of a stream; when he,
All on a sudden, seized me round the waist,
And would have thrown me, headlong, in the water,
Had I not given fresh vigour to my arm,
And hurl'd him,—as a fisherman is wont
To hurl a dog, that will not take the water,—
Into the bosom of the stream. A man,

Standing agape to see the desperate struggle,
Plunged in to save him. Whether he still lives
Is yet beyond my knowledge: for the fear
Of losing thee gave feathers: and I flew,
Like a trained falcon, darting on his quarry,
In hopes of finding thee amid some copse,
Or secret thicket. Many a dingle, dell,
Valley, and glen, I traversed; and my hopes
Had almost yielded to despair; when here,
Fortune—so long mine enemy—at once
Imparadised my hopes.

Lav. Lorenzo! words,
Yes, had I words to thank thee as I ought;
Yet were they dull and indigent. I wish,
Thou couldst but see my feelings; then my heart
Would plead, like angels, for my gratitude.

Lor. Lovely Lavinia, thy sweet words would call
Angels to guard thee. But yon clouds,—behold;
Th' Aurora flashes, and portends a storm.
—Great is thy power, OMNIPOTENT; and vast
The myriad wonders of thy matchless reign!—
No house, no lot, not e'en a woodman's hut,
Adorn these sterile solitudes with smoke,
Curling in peaceful volumes:—but not far,
There is a cavern, form'd of sea-green marble,

Like to those arch'd recesses, in which those
 Enchanting nymphs are fabled to have lived,
 Who warbled such insinuating strains,
 That mariners, delighted and bewilder'd,
 Dropt all their oars, forsook each sail and rudder,
 Lean'd o'er their decks, and listen'd in such rapture,
 That their ill-fated vessels have been drawn
 Into the whirling centre of a vortex ;
 Thence to the bottom of the raging ocean.
 Thither we'll tend:—yet no; within a valley,
 Nested in mountains, hid from human eye,
 Lie the vast fragments of an ancient ruin,
 Which once contain'd a city in its bosom.
 Thither——

Lav. What sounds—— ?

Lor. We must away.—Banditti!
 Lean on this arm ; no power shall force thee from me.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter ROMANO and FRACASTRO.

Rom. Each movement brings us nearer to our foes.
 (*To those without*) Rest where ye are. (*Aside*) Sweet
 Venice, Venice !—would,

Would, I had never left thy yellow waters !

Fra. This rock my shade ; this living moss my bed.

His nerves are strung, fine as the silk-worm's web,
So nicely and so delicately touch'd,
That notes of sweetness vibrate through his frame,
Like the flush'd leaf beneath the evening gale.
A lute, too, whispers solace, when the soul
Melts with the memory of a friend beloved,
Closed in the awful sanctuary of the grave.
I'll try what solace it may wake in him.

(Plays)

Hard is the lot of him, whose doom
Compels him to forsake his home ;
To combat with the savage rude,
In woods, and wastes, and solitude.
Blest, then, is he, whose fortunes bland
Ne'er sent him from his native land!

Rom. Would mine had never ! But no more ; no more.
Music could once entrance my soul ; but now,
Feeling no music in my heart, mine ear,
Tuneless and dull, denies its wonted office.
That air, once heard with joy unspeakable,
I hear as one, who listens to the sound
Of some dull curfew, that, in distant land,
Benumbs the night, and stuns the owl to silence.

Fra. (aside.) I'll play no more. The hour returns
again ;

And all his soul relapses into sadness.

Rom. Hush'd are the wastes of Ethiopia; hush'd
The suffocating solitudes of Senegal;
Awfully hush'd the vast precincts of Nile.
But if the Hyads o'er the wilderness
Breathe on the midnight, and distil soft showers;
The condor, pelican, and ostrich, sip
The drops aerial, and the leopard laps.

Fra. (aside.) Awful it is to see him trace i' the sand,
Such forms and shapes. Alas! his soul's disorder'd.
Would I'd been born so much the mind's physician,
That, when in Greece, I had the skill to cull,
From off the mountains of the Cyclades,
That sacred plant, Nepenthe, which has power
To calm the tumults of a wounded spirit!
That med'cine now had lull'd his soul to peace.

Rom. What late seem'd wrinkled with old age is now
Verdant and rife; and every palm-tree bends
With liquid crystal and depending gems.
So in the midnight of my grief, my soul
Wakes from its sterile palsy; when Francésca,
Rising serene in beauty to my thought,
Hallows the past, disarms th' horrific present,
Clothes hope in smiles, and whispers to my heart,
That justice, sternly virtuous, never dies,
Though oft her slumbers wear the mask of death.

Fra. (*rising.*) Why, then, build sepulchres and
mausoleums,

In which to bury all thy hopes? 'Tis folly.

Rom. (*aside.*) What have I lived for?

Fra. As I breathe,—no insult!

Rom. What have I lived for? To be mock'd? con-
temn'd?

Nay, now, I'll answer this astounding question.

And when I have, do thou proclaim full loud,

If it is folly to receive a wrong,

And then complain, that justice is a sluggard.

Hither; come hither. (*Aside*) I'll rehearse my story.

Enter Officers.

Form ye in semicircle space, and listen.

My native town is Venice:—but my father,

Charm'd with the air of Naples, sojourn'd there,

With me, and others of our house, three months

In every year. Our ruin;—I anticipate!

The king,—King Ferdinand—gave a splendid banquet.

There I first saw,—I see her still!—Francesca;

Sitting, in regal splendour, by the side

Of her famed uncle, Ferdinand. She seem'd

Like one from heaven; delighting every eye.

Rich gems adorn'd her ; but no gems could equal
The liquid lustre of those dark-blue eyes,
Which beam'd like Venus in the vernal heaven.
Such charms! Excuse me ;—though these locks are grey,
'Tis not with age.—They open'd like the rose
Through the green fringes of its mossy woof ;
Rising mid petals, that in valley hang
Their pensive heads ; and from their snowy cells
Throw a rich fragrance o'er the evening air.

Fra. (to LEPARDO.) Bleach'd are his locks ;—cerulean
all his soul!

Rom. I loved her not as those do, who are lapt
In luxury, vanity, and indolence ;
But as a man, who knows what sterling good
Springs ever verdant in a heart, where love
Rises and sets in purity and peace.
I saw and sigh'd in silent admiration,
Full many a day ; and days with love, are ages.
This all men know, who know the force of love.
At length, one evening, I beheld her, sitting
In the king's bower, all silent and alone.
Trembling I stopt :—I knew not what to do!
I stopt! when on the pinions of the air,
Such streams of melody entranced my soul,

I could have listen'd till the doom of day ;
 Had I not heard, "my Julio, Julio, Julio!"
 Drop from her lips ;—half-smother'd with a sigh.
 I stood awhile in breathless rapture : then
 Stole to the bower, surprised her in her love,
 Knelt at her feet, and begg'd an angel's pardon.

Fra. Stand on this side, Lepardo. Thou'rt too
 eager.

Lep. All are too eager : I correct myself.

Fra. Stand all apart ; nor crowd around him thus.

Rom. Frowning she answer'd ; would have fled ; but I,
 Arm'd with high rank, and heir to large possessions,
 Press'd my lorn suit so earnestly, that she
 Listen'd ; then smiled ; then gave me leave to woo ;
 Should the good king approve the generous choice.

Lep. The king consented, I am certain.

Fra. Hush !

Rom. I sought the monarch. "A Venetian noble,
 "Sprung from the noblest family in Rome,
 "Claims rank with princes ;" said the king. I woo'd ;
 The maid consented ; and we married.

Fra. Heaven—

Heaven—what a height for mortal man to fall from !

Rom. I've stol'n an arrow,—a deep—piercing arrow—

From the wide quiver of revenge, depend on.
Six momentary years pass'd over us.
I should have told ye, that Schidoni, too,
Long had the captivating maiden loved.
She hated;—nay, she loathed him. At a banquet,
To which we bade king Ferdinand's royal court,
And to which he,—the viper! as king's chamberlain,
Was, by constraint, invited:—I deserved
A thousand deaths for such an invitation!
The banquet over, all retired to slumber.
Would it had lasted, till the death of time!
But sleep had scarcely visited these lids,
When,—such an agonizing shriek! On waking,
What was the scene my frenzied eyes beheld?

Francesca——

Oh the good gods!—am I alive to tell it?
Francesca, bleeding at my side; struck dead
With mine own dagger,—quivering in her side!
Peace,—peace; be silent: utter not one word.

[Draws a circle round him with his sword.]

Now, may I never from this circle move,
If I speak aught, but what the Gods might hear!
The' assassin fled in silence from my chamber;
Crept to his couch; thence issuing at the shrieks,

With which I raised the palace, he proclaim'd
 Me the assassin :—jealousy of him !

Fra. Was this Schidoni ?

Rom. Dost thou doubt it, sir ?

Fra. No man can doubt it.

Rom. I 'm a fool ; an idiot,
 A very stult. My left hand fain would doubt
 What this, my right hand, doth. [*Bursts into tears.*]

Fra. An agony like this—

Rom. I meant no insult : by St. Mark, I meant none.
 Nay, nay, forgive me :—I am sore all over !
 All Naples rose ! and though 'twas midnight, winter,
 And rain descending in such torrents, that
 It seem'd as if the last, loud, trump had sounded,
 And the whole earth dissolving into nought ;
 Yet every street, lane, alley, terrace, court,
 Garret and roof, resounded with the charge,
 That I,—that I,—that I,—had stabb'd my wife,
 And thrown the horrific crime upon Schidoni !

Fra. Wretch—wretch ;—a caitiff of iniquity.

Rom. Those friends, who loved me, as they sometime
 swore,
 More than themselves ;—my well-dress'd, well-fed,
 friends,

All deck'd in rings, and diamond-hilted swords,
 What did those friends amid my deep distress?
 Forsake me like a pestilence. My servants,
 Bless'd, and thrice bless'd, be every one of them!
 My servants wept; and clothed themselves in mourning.
 May the great Spirit give paradise to them all.

Fra. What did the people in this trying hour?

Rom. Throng round my palace like ten thousand
 hornets.

Fra. And did they seize upon thee, signor?

Rom.

Seize?

Oh my dear father—oh my sacred mother,—
 That ye should live to see a night like that!
 They throated me; and to the prison gates
 Dragg'd me, loud hissing all the way, like serpents.
 Children cried monster; women shriek'd shrill curses;
 Men shouted death; and dogs were taught to howl,
 Whene'er the word, Romano, cross'd their ears.
 Schidoni pension'd witnesses. They swore;
 Naples believed;—Romano was undone!
 They would not hear one word in my defence.
 They held me only as a denizen;
 Rich, great, and noble;—therefore to be hated.
 I was condemn'd unheard;—ruin'd; undone!

My wife, my daughter, fame, and fortune,—all—
 In one short hour:—Too much for human strength!
 My mind;—I'm ruin'd:—all, the world contains,
 Could never recompense my soul. I'm shatter'd,
 Beyond all power of medicine.

Fra. No, no!

Rom. Would I could think so. Yes, my mind is ruin'd.
 They took my child;—I know not whither! Never
 From that sad moment have I heard of her.
 My mother—dumb-struck!—died in speechless horror.
 My father saw me, like a felon, dragg'd
 Through a loud, hissing, populace, to my prison.
 Then sought the bloody death-bed chamber; where
 —Th' horrific scene!—his raven hair turn'd grey;
 Wild palsy seized his venerable frame;
 Down sunk he on the clotted bed; and died,
 In laughing madness, on Francesca's corse.
 The good, the wise, the excellent old man!

[*Hides his face in his robe.*]

Lep. Save, or he falls!

Fra. Such labyrinths of woe
 Would bend the stoutest of mankind: Lean here.

Rom. Not so: a monument of agony
 Shall prove a pyramid of strength. (*Hysterically.*)
 Whoo-loo!

Lep. Well, as I live, I never heard aught like it!

Rom. Amid these mountains once a hermit lived.

His food dry berries, and his drink the dews,
Distill'd from leaves of olives. He—; but stay;
My mind is wandering in the clouds:—my tale?
Where left I? I'm bewilder'd! where, where left I?
Schidoni pension'd witnesses, I say.

All, all, believed. Amid the senseless town,
One man alone, except my faithful servants,
One man alone was found with mind to doubt,
And heart to pity. He believed me wrong'd.
He was my gaoler, and a wonder. He—
I saved his brother, when a boy, from drowning:
Ah me—ye weep. I thank, I thank ye, brothers.

Fra. We need not blush to shed a tear at this.

Rom. He was, I say, a wonder:—he was grateful!
Applied the balm of comfort to my heart,
And ope'd his gates in secrecy. I fled!
The court sent messengers to Venice, Rome,
Milan, and all the states of Italy,
With threats against their senates, should they screen me.
In this extremity, for years I lived,
Amid these mountains, where the sun shines never,
Hopeless, nay desolate; agonized with wrong,
Accusing man, and almost doubting heaven.

At length, I heard my best and earliest friend
 Is chos'n to fill the ducal chair of Venice.
 Then I applied for succour and revenge.
 This is my tale of injury. For this,
 I've sworn eternal vengeance to Schidoni;
 And for believing his enormous charge,
 And hearing not one word in my defence,
 Have I vow'd death to all the sons of Naples.

Fra. And we'll assist thee in thy just revenge.

Rom. My heart's all gratitude.

Fra. Remember—one

Rich consolation thou hast still. Schidoni
 Groans 'neath a mass of wickedness; while you—

Rom. Ay:—if he felt his wickedness, his thoughts
 Were far more terrible, than tongue could speak,
 Or fancy picture. But he does not. He—?
 The fiend exults in wickedness.

Fra. He has

As many dark, and life-consuming sins,
 As zebra stripes, or panting leopard spots.
 His breath's a mildew, and his blood flows yellow.

Rom. A living leprosy;—a pangolin,
 Safe at all points: invulnerable! a vampire,
 Which, while she sucks an Indian in the shade,

Fans him, unconscious, to his last, last, sleep.
I would, I were embalm'd amid the stars,
In rude Arcturus, or Cassiope,
Orion's girdle, or the northern wane!
—This night, we'll hold a banquet 'mid the ruins
Of that vast castle—but ye know not of it.
One rich autumnal morning, as I roved
Over these mountains, suddenly I came
To the cragg'd margin of a precipice.
My head turn'd giddy: yet I look'd below:
And there beheld, upon a promontory,
Screen'd from the fury of wild mountain-storms,
By woods, fantastic, towering up the glen,
In many a fold, a ruin'd castle: built,
No doubt, by some crusader: for the walls,
Sections, or elevations, rose, surcharg'd
With Saracenic ornaments. I stood,
Awhile admiring. Down, at length, I bounded
Like to an ibex. 'Twas a pile gigantic!
Shatter'd in fragments; dark, but magnificent.
Silence and solitude and secrecy
Reign'd there in holy brotherhood. No trace
Ev'n of a wandering shepherd! Nothing whisper'd
Aught of mankind, but as a monument.

Men seem to have shunn'd it, as a haunt of spirits ;
Which, by the star-light, cheat their wandering steps,
And lure them on to misery and ruin.

Therefore it lies remote from human search,
As if amid the mountains of Imaus.

Until our messengers return, revenge demands
A secret refuge. Let us march : and there
Safety shall wait on silence and discretion.

Heard ye not thunder 'mid the distant mountains ?

Fra. Scarcely an hour glides over us, but we see
Deep torrents rushing from the clouds ; huge oaks,
Whirling in eddies from the cliffs ; and rocks,
All rent asunder, tumbling down t' the vale.

Rom. It is indeed a wilderness, where Nature
Seems to be proud in trying of her strength.
But who moves yonder ? By St. Mark—a youth,
Bearing a fine-form'd woman in his arms !

[*LORENZO, bearing LAVINIA, is seen in the distance,
climbing one of the precipices.*

Fra. He must move cautiously. The cliff impends
O'er a deep precipice ; and one treacherous stone
May steep them, helpless, in the gulf below.

Rom. Nine years have roll'd their melancholy round,
Since last I saw the figure of a woman.

How acts the vision on my shatter'd soul?
Like Venus, glittering in an azure heaven,
'Twixt two dark volumes, charged with angry tempests.
Hasten;—the wanderers! Bring them to us: follow:
Who knows what deed may wait upon the morrow?
[*Exeunt.*

BOOK III.

SCENE I.

A Heath. Time—Noon.

Flor. (without.) Take care, signor. Mind how you walk.

(Enters).

The hoary heath, the blasted tree,
Are emblems of a captive's pain;
When, thirsting for his liberty,
He sighs, and weeps, and burns in vain.

What a wild and desolate place this is! I saw the horrid feet of a wolf just now, printed in sand and blood, as if it had drawn a stag backward. Not a word to the signor! He would fancy a wolf in every gush of the wind. A little more to the right, signor. There now, I declare, you walk very well without a guide.

Enter FONTANO.

Fon. Just here I do. Where are we? In a forest?

Flor. On a low, sandy, heath ; just like a desert. We have left the woods. What a vast number of birds there are in this wilderness, signor.' I wonder they should live, where there is not a soul to listen to their music. Did you not say, signor, that the bird, we heard just now, was a nightingale ?

Fon. Yes ; 'twas a nightingale : and notes so wild,
So rich, so long continued, never yet
Were heard in Syria, or in Persian groves ;
Circassian vallies ; Tempe's sacred glen ;
Nor e'en amid the gardens of Damascus.

Flor. Fairies, they say, signor, live upon the brains of nightingales.

Fon. Do they so, my little bird of Paradise ?

Flor. Yes, signor ; and not only on the brains of nightingales ; but upon the leaves of violets, blue and white, yellow and purple ; single and double ; mixt and unmixt. Oh—it must be excellent food !

Violet leaves and nightingale's brains
Are food for gentle fairy ;
When she whispers amorous strains
To slumbering maids of the dairy.

Fon. Sing you, and dance, too, at the self-same moment ?

One might suppose, thou wert a wood-nymph ; born
On fields of Enna, whence the Stygian Jove
Rapt the fair daughter of majestic Ceres.
Why dost thou dance ?

Flor. Because the sun doth shine,
And makè me glad. I feel, as I could spring
High as the rainbow. Sitting on her ring,
I'd hail the stars ; while all below would seem
Like seas of milk, encompassing a land,
Flourishing with vi'lets, hyacinths, and jasmine,
Roses, carnations, daffodils, and snowdrops.

Fon. (aside.) This boy, at times, seems older than
he is.

Sometimes he prattles like a child ; then seems
All wisdom like a man :—now boy, now girl ;
Nature's own child. He dances round me, too,
Like mountain zephyr round an Oread queen.

Flor.

To sing when we dance, and to dance when we sing,
Are enough to turn shepherd-boy into a king :
To play on a viol, and waltz on a green,
Are enough to turn shepherdess into a queen.

Fon. Thou art so cheerful and engaging, boy,
That nightingales will cover thee with leaves ;

And flowers spring up, in myriads, o'er thy grave,
To tell each stranger, as he passes by,
That Nature's happiest work lies buried there.

Flor. O that were charming, should it e'er prove true.
Now, signor, I'll sing you a regular song; but you must
not laugh. Don't look at me, signor. I cannot sing, if
you look.

Fon. Would that I could! alas, alas, I never—

Flor. Oh me! I beg your pardon, signor. I quite
forgot, that you were blind. I am a thoughtless little
person; without wit; and, I am sorry to say, without
much money.

Fon. You make me smile, in spite of all my sorrows.

Flor. I'm glad of that. Now, signor, I'm going to
begin.

From the grot, where Echo lies,
At dawn of day fond Zephyr flies;
And gliding on the rays of morning,
With many a dye the clouds adorning;
Now he soars, and now he falls;
Now on gentle Echo calls;
While, from her green recess, the nymph replies,
In wildest melodies.

There, signor, is not that very pretty?

Fon. Beautifully said, and beautifully sung.

Flor. But there is only one stanza, signor. Shall I sing you the other?

Fon. Ay, my dear boy; full twenty, if you will.

Flor. (aside.) Now then. I'm almost ashamed, too. But I love, from my heart, to cheer the mind of my master.

Every glen and mountain round
Repeats the wild, mysterious sound;
And all the scene, both far and near,
Delighted lends a listening ear;
Till, lost in circling eddies wide,
From hill to hill, from side to side,
Her hovering voice, in sweet progression, dies
In gentlest ecstasies.

There, signor, never ask me to sing again.

Fon. I cannot answer;—since you sing so well.

But I am weary, e'en to fainting, boy.

Flor. Then let us lie down, signor. There;—now you are safe.

[Places FONTANO in a nook.]

Though it is little more than noon, this shade
Shall make me sleep, as if it were the night.
But do not wake me, sire, as mothers oft
Wake their loved infants, when they sleep too long;
Fearing, that death prevents their eyes from opening.

But let me rest, till sleep itself forsakes
Its downy couch.

Fon. Sleep well; and may
Enchanting dreams delight thy slumbering lids.

Flor. Dream of my mother? and my father too?
For that—one kiss upon thy reverend hand.
Now to my couch: the leaves are soft; and soft
Must be my supplication to the Virgin.

[*Pulls out her beads, and begins telling them.*

O Purissima!

Parch'd is the scene with light and heat!
My lips turn pale; my temples beat.
Oh do not make me wail and weep;
Because mine eyes incline to sleep,
Before,—all clad in guilty weeds,—
I've told this lengthen'd string of beads.

O Pianissima!

When Hesper throws her robe of light
Over the listening ear of Night,
I'll tune my heart, I'll tune my voice;
I'll make the hills and vales rejoice;
Till, rising 'mid the vault of space,
My prayers have reach'd the throne of grace.

O Sanctissima!

Holy, holy, Virgin, throw
The dews of pardon round my brow!

My soul's asleep; I dream of thee;
 My soul dissolves in ecstasy.
 Then do not clothe my head in weeds,
 Be..cause...I can..not...tell....my....beads.

Fon. Sweet boy—he slept before his hymn was closed.
 Guard him, ye watchers of the day and night:
 Guard him, ye spirits of the azure deep;
 And YE, who guide with hallow'd steps to heaven.

[*Sleeps.*

SCENE II.

*Ruins of an immense Castle among the Apennines,
 bordering on the sea; between the arches of which
 appears a deep glen, lying in the bosom of a vast pile
 of mountains, capt with snow: some little way up one
 of which is seen the monastery of Salvator.*

Time; Sunset.

A banquet, spread upon the fallen entablatures.

*CERELLO, sitting with the hawk upon his knee in the
 distance.*

ROMANO, reclining on one of the fragments, engaged at

chess with CARLO:—FRACASTRO revising a MS. ; his lyre lying beside him :—Officers carousing.

Rom. Check to the king.

Carlo. Check-mate?

Rom. Check-mate.

Fra. I'll take the conqueror. A knight or bishop,
To make the' engagement equal?

Rom. Take a knight.

[FRACASTRO takes CARLO's seat, and CARLO joins
the carousing party.

(Chorus.)

The winds and the waters re-echo our song ;
And murmur success, as they wander along.

[ROMANO quits his seat suddenly ; comes forward,
and sits at the base of one of the columns.

Rom. This merriment o'erwhelms me. Yet I've
heard,

'Tis wise to mix the graceful with the grave.
These silent emblems of magnificence !—
I've named this paradise the silent glen.
The sun sinks deep ; the azure cliffs above
Glow into purple ; and the waves beneath

Reflect the varied tintings of the forest.
 There bees store nectar ; there the woodlark builds ;
 And doves cling, cooing, to their native perch.
 There the lone nightingale hymns vespers ; there
 The rich nyctanthes scents the evening gale.

*[Takes off his sword, breast-plate, and helmet ;
 and places them on one of the architraves.]*

Fra. Signor, you quit us. Is it well to leave
 The feast, the revel, and the song ; and brood—— ?

Rom. My friend,—the oil of merriment is gall,
 When the soul quickens with an inward anguish.
 Sorrow works wonders ;—I 'm a grey old man.

[Pulls a few hairs from his temples.]

Ere woe had stolen my golden youth away,
 Young with the young, and aged with the old,
 Calm was the tenour of my life ; and sweet
 The placid whisper of all-councillling time.
 But why paint pictures, that recal past hours,
 Never, no, never to return ?—when life
 And love were one :—when life and love struck chords
 In hallow'd unison. O happy time !
 Lost in oblivion ; or remember'd only,
 As the bright skies of Italy are mourn'd
 By those, who, stranded on the fretted coast

Of Nova-Zembla, far remote from man,
 Behold cliffs rise, whose tops are lost in clouds,
 Eternal snows, and pyramids of ice ;
 Where nought is heard, but ocean's ceaseless roar ;
 And nought of animated life is seen,
 But huge sea-serpents, and shagg'd arctic bears.
 Marco,—observe ! Thou know'st, of many an hour,
 In silence and in solitude, I cheated
 Old weary Time in modelling a statue.
 Thou and Bernardo—journey to the quarry.
 Bring the loved image. In some sacred niche,
 We'll dedicate the marble to the ruins.

[*Exeunt MARCO and BERNARDO.*

[*An officer comes down from the carousing party.*

Offi. I wonder, sir ;—I wonder, you .. should have ...
 a liking to ... that Venetian galley-master there ... He'll,
 one day, be-be-be-tray you, sir. There's danger here
 ... six .. days out of ... seven.

Rom. I want no telescope to see through you.
 Mere envy, sir ; and nothing else : begone :
 Stay not one moment. You're in wine ; and show
 What you wish sober. I've observed you long.
 Nay, sir ; no argument : get hence ; and seek
 For listening dupes, where listening dupes abound.

Offi. (*aside.*) He's turn'd me sober;—I'll straight
march to Naples.

May plagues and mildews light upon them both.

[*Exit.*

Rom. Baseness I hate in all; but most of all
I do despise a low-bred, envious, man!
Come here, Fracas—; but I'll not stoop to tell him.
List, now; how sweetly, mid yon deep recess,
The notes of this wild instrument will echo;
As if some spirit dwelt within its bosom;
Living in rapture on the rainbow's tints,
Spring's opening blossoms, and th' ambrosial dews,
Which float along the mountain's shadowy van,
Distill'd from hyacinths and the evening air.
There's not an echo in all Italy,
France, Tyrol, Switzerland, or Sicily;
Not e'en the sacred echoes of Olympus,
Can with this vie. It answers from yon forest;
Then from the cliff, impending o'er the torrent;
Whence, passing through the variegated woods,
Which belt Salvator's monastery, dies
In whispers, doubt, and mystery away.

[*Blows his bugle. Echoes.*

Is not that magical?

Fra. The loveliest sounds,
That ever met my wondering ear.

Rom. What 's that?
Another bugle answers in the distance.

Fra. Perchance, the lonely wanderers, whom we saw
Climbing a precipice.

Offi. Perhaps, 'tis Sardo.

Rom. Who journey'd forward to conduct him hither?

Fra. Pedro. They come : I know their footsteps well.

Enter SARDO and PEDRO.

Rom. Sardo? Thou art an antelope. Thou hast
Outstript the eagle in his flight. Good news,
I hope, has given good pinions. Welcome.

All. Welcome.

Sardo. Signor and signors, I am proud : my thanks
For this, your kind reception. These two letters
Will speak the issue of my embassy.

Rom. What says the venerable doge of Venice?

[*Reads.*

There 's always comfort from the golden Venice.
What news from Mantua? (*reads.*) Oh the faith of man!
The-Duke seems dubious; he distrusts his means;
His frame is sickly; and he fears the senate.

He thinks, they think me guilty, then ! Yet says,
 In two years' time——: The emptiness of man !
 In two years' time, the world and all that's in it,
 May be no better than an empty bubble.

Fra. I hope, the letters please thee, sir.

Rom. They must :

Since written by a friend : They're bound by custom.

Voice (without). Willōx-ō-whōo-hōo.

Cer. An owl ! He'd better not come near my hawk.

Quiet, sir ; down : be quiet, griffin-grooven.

Rom. What noise was that ?

Sardo. I'll tell thee, signor.—Pedro !

[*Whispers:—Exit PEDRO.*

As we came hither, we beheld a boy,
 Roll'd up, and sleeping like a dormouse, 'neath
 The chequer'd shadow of a linden tree.
 We raised him gently from his leafy bed,
 And brought him hither. He, at first, slept soundly :
 But, in the moment he awaked, alarm
 Seized on his senses ; and such sorrow flow'd,
 That we repented, we had brought him with us.

Rom. Is there not misery in the world enough,
 But you must wantonly increase it, sir ?
 I hate all wanton cruelties :—they're unmanly.

Sardo. Methought, you 'd like him for a page.

Rom.

A page?

The time 's gone by for pages.

Fra.

He is here.

Enter PEDRO leading FLORANTHE.

He seems no savage; and appears more beautiful

Than does become his sex. Good morrow.

Sardo.

Pause.

Perhaps he 'll imitate a bird. He did so,

As we came hither. Imitate the owl.

Flo. (calls.) Willōx-ō-whōō-hōō!

Rom. He is an idiot. But I know not whether
We ought to pity, or to envy him.

Flo. (calls.) Cūr-lèw!

Rom. It grieves my heart to see a mind so weak,
Usurp a frame so noble. Give him food.

Flo. (aside.) Oh my poor master; my poor unfortunate
master! What will you do without Floranthe?

Fra. Were he not thus accoutred,—as I live,
With locks all tendrill'd like the clustering vine;
With eyes like gazelle's; teeth like Indian pearls;
Neck form'd of snow, and lips like morning's blush;
I should, I swear, have hail'd him for a girl,

Who wish'd for once to act the truant's part,
 And gain a sun-burnt countenance at noon,
 Looking for birds'-nests. Take this orange, boy.
 Throw it away? Pomegranates suit thee better?

Flo. (*plays with two, by throwing them up in the air, and catching them, as they fall.*) Yāhōō—yāhōō—
 yāhōō—hōō!

Rom. Do not alarm him farther, my Fracastro.
 Let him go whither he may wish.

Fra. Poor soul!

Flo. (*calls.*) Willōx-ō-whōo-hōo!

Rom. (*aside.*) Now would I give five dukedoms, if I
 had them,

That I'd been born beneath a woodman's cot,
 And been an idiot, like this whimpering boy,
 Ere I had left the sacred isles of Venice.

Fra. What—are you going? Nay—you must not go.

Flo. I shall go.—I will, I shall; I will, I shall. Whō-
 hōo!

Rom. Nay let him wander where he will. He's
 harmless.

Flo. (*aside.*) O me—I was near dropping this dear,
 dear, portrait. Poō-loō.—Poō-loō!

Fra. What is he hiding?

Marco. Let us see.

Flo. Tõ-cõõ.

Marco. Come, let us see. What secret hast thou here ?

Flo. A hawk, a hawk, (*striking him*). (*Aside*) The mean, audacious, man !

Rom. That serves you right. I am ashamed of you. Idiots are sacred. We may call them errors, In the vast scheme of nature ; but they are not. They 're framed for use ; if 'tis for this alone, That, bearing human form, they check our pride, Excite our pity, or alarm our fears, Lest we, at best, may be but idiots too.

Flo. (*aside.*) Idiot ?

Rom. Let the boy go. He shall be teased no longer.

Fra. Go, my poor boy ; and take my blessing with thee.

Flo. (*aside.*) They say Love once was prison'd in a mouse-trap.

I'd be a mouse for half a florin now,
Were he the gaoler, and the wires not wide. (*Addressing SARDO¹, FRACASTRO², MARCO³, and ROMANO⁴.*)

You're a fox¹ ;—you're a stag² ;—you're a wolf³ ;—you're a bee⁴ ;
But you never saw bird, fish, or insect like me.

An owl, a flamingo; a curlew, a swallow:
 I can sing like a lark; like a forest-boy halloo.
 I can climb like a squirrel; and run like a hare;
 I can scream like an eagle, and growl like a bear.
 Good evening, kind signor⁴;—good evening, young man⁵.
 And you, signor wolf³, overtake, if you can.

[*Runs out.*

Rom. 'Tis the last wave, that whelms the sinking
 ship.

I ought to laugh, as you do; but I cannot.
 There's something in the manner of this boy,
 I cannot comprehend. Go after him:—yet stay.
 What right have we to play upon his weakness?
 Give me a lute. (*Aside*) The skill, I have remain,
 Shall charm the scorpion, memory, to peace.

Fra. Nay, Sardo; bring it. Art thou deaf? 'Tis
 yonder.

Sardo. Pardon me, signor. I was thinking how
 The boy deceived us. He's no fool, I warrant.

Rom. Foolish, or wise, we have no right to keep
 him.

Come, signor Carlo:—no;—let Sardo try.
 Come, Sardo; place the pieces, and move quickly;
 Or I'm check-mated. Take a knight; begin.
 Nay now, I'll venture—(*aside.*) Oh this Duke of
 Mantua!—

He has disorganiz'd my skill. (To CARLO.) Play you.
Return the knight, and let the field be equal.

[Rises; comes forward; and leans upon the
shoulder of FRACASTRO.

This Duke of Mantua,—we were boys together.
Oft have we climb'd the Apennines; and oft
Made the transparent Brenta waft our shouts
And the loud echoes of our winding horns,
As the wild stag swam, panting, down the stream.
He was a suitor to thy mother; but
She thought, she saw a sordid spirit in him.
She knew him better than myself. Two years?
'Tis death to wait; ruin to lean on any.
Give me the lute. I thank thee, sir. Marsyas!

[Strikes a few chords.

The full-orb'd moon will be eclips'd to-night.
'Tis nineteen summers, since, as gliding o'er
The balmy surface of Venetian seas;
Our voyage to Naples!—as we coasted near,
And heard soft anthems from the pilgrims, kneeling
At our lov'd Lady of Loretto's shrine,
The moon waned from us; and the stars alone
Gave evidence of light. Just nineteen years!
The moon must, therefore, be eclips'd to-night.

[Retires to a lonely part of the scene.

Fra. He will not play now, though he holds the lute.
Oh what a picture is a mind in ruins!

Rom. What? Is it thus? I'm paralyzed. I could
As soon draw syrens from the azure deep,
Or seize the sceptre of the universe,
As draw one note from this all-speaking lute.

*[Comes forward, intermittingly; sometimes quickly,
sometimes slowly; holding the lyre in one hand;
and waving his other, with a circular movement,
over the crown of his head.]*

Wretch that I am, what governs me? Perdition.

What right have I to act the mimic?—Lutes?

Will lutes, or harps, or dulcimers, restore

My murder'd wife? my long-lost child? my honour?

Out on all lutes! *[Throws it down with great violence.]*

Haste to your couches: I'll return anon.

There is a moment, sacred to oblivion,

For all, save me. Sleep! sleep! I trust no more

To visions, dreams,—fantastic dreams—and hopes.

(To FRACASTRO) Should I ne'er touch this honest hand
again;

Nay—start not: but remember, that I once

Thought all men honest; all men kind and true.

Farewell; farewell: the stars will one day move

Backward ; and, wandering from their stated spheres,
Darkness and death will sit upon their thrones.

Mind, that I say so. Fare ye well. [Exit.

Fra. Your couches !

He's so much alter'd, since we knew him first,
That every word and look and start alarm me.

See, see, a star,—perhaps a world condemn'd,—
Falls from the zenith of the firmament !

Haste to your couches ; it portends strange issues.

[*Exeunt into the interior of the ruins.*

SCENE III.

A part of the Heath, described in Book III. Sc. I. p. 75.

A Precipice, at a short distance, overhanging the Sea.

*A loud barking of foxes is heard, mixed with the
screaming of eagles, and the howling of wolves.*

Enter FONTANO.

Boy—boy ! where art thou ? whither he is gone,
And I left desolate, is beyond all thought.

What frightful screams and horrid sounds are these !

Wolves, foxes, eagles, all in dreadful train
 To carry madness to my throbbing brain.
 Hark—they approach. No shelter! I am lost.
 Boy! boy!—To leave me in a desert thus.
 Curst be all gold,—the assassin of the soul!
 For gold, the boy has left me to a fate,
 Even more terrible than words can picture.
 Which is my path? I dare not stir one step,
 This way or that. Deep precipices stretch,
 Hideous on every side; and what's plain land
 Imagination changes into forests,
 Dens, torrents, whirlpools, cataracts, gulfs, or caverns.

Enter SCHIDONI.

Schid. By this rude heath, I shall return to Naples.
 Who have we here? some poisoner, I suppose,
 Looking for hemlock. Is it possible?
 It cannot; and yet is. He gropes his way.
 The boy has left him! He's a bold, young, urchin.
 This is plain land; I'll lead him to a better.
 I ought to do so; since I wooed his daughter.

Fon. Ah, my sweet boy; I've wrong'd thee much:
 my boy!

Art thou still near me? Take this hand, dear child.

Heaven—what is this? Oh me—a hand of ice,
 Large as a giant's, and all wither'd. Who?
 Who, and what art thou? Strike me:—I am ready.
 Strike the last stroke; but do not grasp me thus.
 Let my hand go!

Schid. (*aside.*) Not three steps off, there is a precipice—

Flor. (*without.*) Willōx.—ō—whōo—hōo!

Fon. Oh—the great Father of the world—I thank thee.

The hand has fallen! Imagination oft
 Makes all men martyrs. Darkness palsies me.
 I thought, I felt an icy hand touch mine,
 Like to the paralyzing hand of Satan.

Flor. (*without.*) Signor! signor! signor!

Fon. The boy:—the boy! All-gracious heaven—I
 thank thee.

Ne'er will I murmur at my fate again.

[SCHIDONI retires a little:—FLORANTHE rushes
 in, flies to FONTANO, and falls at his feet.

Fon. Whither, my guardian angel, hast thou been?
 I've pass'd an anxious, miserable, time,
 Since I awoke, and could not make thee hear me.

Flo. I've ran so fast, signor, I can scarcely speak.
 Two men found me asleep on that bank. They took
 me up, and carried me away. When I awoke, I thought

I should have died. They took me to the ruins of an immense castle, not two leagues distant; and who should I see there?—Romano and all his officers.

Fon. Impossible!

Flo. I saw them all, signor, as certain as I see you now. He seem'd a kind-hearted signor; but I wanted to return; and what do you think I did? I put on the face of a fool; and passed myself off for a fool. And I did it so well, signor, that I truly believe, they were as glad to get rid of me, as I was to get rid of them.

Fon. A masterpiece of wisdom!

Schid. (*coming down a little.*) Is it thus?

Flor. Before I came away, however, I let them all know, I was not quite such a fool, as they took me to be.

Schid. This boy's a wit;—I shall observe him closer.

Flo. (*recitative.*)

When the clouds break, th' aerial deep serene
Glows with the lustre of the starry scene.
Yet stars may shine; while all the scene below
Is wrapt in mist, in misery, and woe.

There was one officer among them, named, I think, Fracas—Fracastro, or some such name; so good; so mild; so gentle; yet so manly. Hear you not military music?

Schid. What may this mean? [Exit.

Fon. No limit to our dangers!

List how soft music swells upon the gale.

Now all is silence. Hark!—it swells again;

Rising and falling with the buoyant wind.

Flo. Depend upon it, signor—Romano is coming in search of us. Let us hide ourselves in this nook. But do not be afraid, signor; I do not believe, he would touch a hair of our heads.

[*They hide themselves.*

Enter the King, VERCELLI, and several officers.

King. Remain ye there: we shall be with you soon.

Now I shall tell ye, wherefore we came hither.

Velutri whispers, that Fontano is

More wrong'd, more injur'd, than my tongue can speak.

This is the wilderness, in which he travels,

Led by a guide. We'll visit him;—and try

Our utmost skill and wisdom to discover,

Whether Fontano or Schidoni most

Deserves th' ignominy of a public scaffold.

Here comes a stranger; let us ask of him.

Enter LEPARDO.

Sir, hast thou seen a blind man on his way,
Led by a youth; and leaning on a staff,
Like what is writ of Belisarius?

Lep. The very man I seek myself. I have not.

[FLORANTHE looks out; and, after whispering to

FONTANO, goes up to LEPARDO.

Flor.

I'm hungry, thirsty, cold, and poor;
Obliged to beg from door to door.
No cot have I to lay my head,
Or mother's care to give me bread:
'Mid hail and rain, in frost and snow,
The sport of all the winds, that blow!
Forlorn I rove from day to day,
Along this rough and rugged way.
Oh, Signor! do bestow upon
Affliction's poor, deserted, son,
One little gift to help him on.

Lep. Thou art an eloquent beggar, whoever thou art;
and I will give thee a ducat, if thou wilt tell me, whether
or not thou hast seen a blind gentleman travelling this
way.

Flor. Stop here one moment. [Runs to FONTANO.
Signor—a rich cavalier! Take hold of my hand, and let

me lead thee to him. Here is the Gentelezza, that you want.

King. (*aside.*) This is most fortunate.

Lep. Most noble signor,

I pay thee all the homage of a friend.

A messenger, return'd from Naples, has

Inform'd Romano of thine injuries.

Fon. Well, sir, what then? Romano is a man,
Whom once I loved; but whom I now disdain
As much, or more.

Lep. Thou dost mistake him, sir.

He is a man, more sinn'd against, than ever

Breathed the pure incense of Italian skies.

He is an upright, honourable, man.

Give him the sanction of thine injuries then;

And thou shalt reap revenge, as well as he.

Fon. Is his ambition, then, revenge? Destruction;
Whispering, like harlots, only to betray.

Bear this in mind:—Misfortune comes from heaven,
To cleanse the heart, and purify the soul.

A heartless traitor to the land, that bore me?

False to my king? Oh shame, oh shame; to wrong

These sightless eyes with such an imputation.

Country;—my country! while thy happy vales

Blush purple with rich vineyards ; while dark clouds
 Roll round the girdles of thy mountains ; while
 One cot remains for shelter 'mid the storm ;
 Nay—while one leaf shall vibrate on another ;
 Load me with taunts ; oppress me thick with wrongs ;
 Make me a monument of public scorn ;
 Yes,—though I begg'd from strangers,—I'd call down
 The choicest gifts of bounteous Heaven upon thee.

King. (aside.) Oh miracle of honour !

Lep. Hear me, signor.

Fon. No ;—I'll not hear. I'll hear no more. The
 Power,

That rules the destinies of men and kingdoms,
 Visits the crime of treason to our country,
 Even more heavily than murder.

King (to LEPARDO). Signor—

Stand thee aside :—I can refrain no longer.

Canst thou forgive ? Most injur'd martyr, say,
 Canst thou forgive ?

Fon. (kneels.) My sovereign ? 'Tis a dream.

My fancy wanders, and mine ears deceive me.

King. No—no ;—ah no ! It is thy sovereign bends.
 These tears respect ; and, if thou canst,—forgive !

Lep. (aside.) I'm lost in wonder.

Fon. Dearly valued master—

I know thy nature: thou hast been deceived.
 Let us, then, drown all memory of the past
 In this embrace.

King. I clasp thee to my heart.

Ver. (to LEPARDO.) Come, sir, with me. Receive the
 meed of treason.

Lep. Treason? what treason? I'm from Venice.

Ver. *That*

Is to yourself. These chains are light.

Lep. *Unlawful.*

Against the law of nations. I'm from Venice.

Ver. Venice or France: it matters not. Thou hast
 Striven to seduce a subject of the king;
 And thou must, therefore, pay the penalty.

[*While the officer is binding LEPARDO, and FONTANO is introducing FLORANTHE to the King, SCHIDONI enters on the opposite side.*

Schid. Death and destruction—who are these? The
 king?

Fontano, too? undone; undone! The furies!

[*Retreats.*

Flo. (recitative.)

The rain may fall in torrents down,
 And every towering rock be rent;
 The winds may blow, and fortune frown;
 My master smiles, and I'm content.

King. One of Romano's officers has been with me,
Told me his haunts : he has, in truth, betray'd him.
But from some words, I heard Velutri drop,
I have some reason to suspect, Romano
May have been wrong'd, as much as you. Shall we
Dare to adventure? Shall we leave our army,
At some short distance from Romano's haunts,
Provoke his version, and so probe the truth?
You can appear to sanction his designs,
And introduce Vercelli and myself,
As pilgrims, guiding thee the road to Venice.

Fon. Your highness wills;—my duty is obedience.

King. Take off those chains. (*To LEPARDO*). We
will to see Romano.

Lead thou the journey. But observe this caution :
Let him not know, that Ferdinand, the king,
Has left his state, at hazard of his life,
In hopes to find him innocent. Our army—
Should he discover us, and presume to treat
Our Royal person as a foe, a signal,
Giv'n merely thus, relieves us in a moment.

Lep. I shall be proud, most Royal sir, to act,
As you may please to charge me.

King. Now, Vercelli,
Command our army to begin the march.

Flo. (*aside.*) Then I shall see Fracastro once again !

[*VERCELLI gives the word, and the whole army passes over the stage. Military music.*

King. (*To FONTANO.*) Lean on this arm.

Flo. Nay, lean on mine: 'tis yours.

Take this warm hand:—Where'er you go;
O'er fields of ice, o'er wastes of snow;
Amid the mountain's mist and rain,
In sickness, sorrow, want, or pain;
Still,—if I travel by your side,—
You ne'er will want a faithful guide.
And when this earthly scene is o'er,
And pain and anguish thrill no more;
Still, side by side, we'll traverse. Thou,
Who now art led by me, shalt throw
Some of thy glories round my brow;
And by this mantle,—ript and riven,—
Shalt guide me up the path to heaven.

Fon. Excellent boy—The world has not thy peer !

[*Exeunt.*

[*Re-enter SCHIDONI, in a paroxysm of passion; beating his forehead, and sometimes holding a dagger to his breast.*

Schid. What have I seen ? and whither shall I fly ?

Curst be the hour, I first beheld the sun ;

And curst the day, that gave my mother birth.

And yet I loved the tottering, good, old woman !

Nay, I could weep, to think on what she suffer'd.
Would I had been as dutiful, as she
Was kind and good ! yet wherefore ? Since reward
Comes not to virtuous actions ;—since I see,
That good men perish,—bad ones do no more,—
Like horses, dogs, hyenas, and constrictors,
Where is the use of virtue ? since to starve
On hungry hope is all th' inheritance,
The good and wise seem doom'd to. I have seen it !
Where virtue is,—there we see sorrow, want,
A martyrdom to treachery or revenge,
Hatred or envy, jealousy or despair,
A silent anguish, or a public wrong.
Who then but fools shall court the ugly cheat ?
Live while ye can ; and perish, when ye must.
That is my creed ; and shall be, too, my practice.
And yet I could not, I confess, have been
Worse used by fortune, had I lived, and toiled,
For days, weeks, months, nay weary years, or ages,
For others' benefit, rather than mine own.
Stay : stay ;—I'm hasty :—there is solace yet.
Romano's haunts, I think the urchin said,
Lie in the depth of yon sequester'd glen.
I loved his wife with passion. But for him,

Perhaps, Francesca had been mine. May all
 The curse of Cain, if such a man there was,
 May all the curses, that can light on man,
 Plague, famine, thirst, insanity, and hate
 Of all he loved, bewilder him! But for him—

[Stamping the earth with great violence.]

Perhaps, I say, Francesca had been mine.
 He loved her, woo'd her,—married her! One day,
 I met her coming from St. Agnes' cloisters,
 Veil'd, and her beads beside her. She had been,
 —It matters not—I touch'd her hand. She frown'd,
 As if 'twere treason I'd been guilty of.
 I was revenged upon them both! This portrait—

[Taking a miniature from his garment.]

Thou wert a lovely angel, I confess.
 Hark!—'Tis the echo of the sounds, which show
 The road, returning. Never more shall I—
 Yet stay;—I have it.—I'm in paradise!
 I will return unto the fisherman.
 Ere this, no doubt, he is return'd from Naples.
 I'll send him to Theresa for my harp;
 (A few hours' journey); and some counterfeits
 Of coins and keys; desire him to ascend
 Yon valley to Salvator's porch; where I

Shall meet him on the morrow. It is done!

[*Puts up the portrait.*]

I'll act such service to king Ferdinand,
That all the past shall be as clean wiped off
The tablet of his memory, as if
Th' infernal characters never had been written.
Service to him were service to myself;
Pardon and riches, dignity and power.
To him, who robb'd me of Francesca, chains,
Wheels, racks, and saws;—the pillory and the gibbet!

[*Exit.*]

BOOK IV.

SCENE I.

The sea-shore. A few ships are seen passing and re-passing in the distance ; with a vast number of hawks, puffins, guillemots, and other sea-birds hovering over the cliffs.

A Lunar Rainbow stretches from side to side.

Towards the south, opens a small valley, over which stretches an aqueduct ; connecting the outward wall of the castle with the side of the opposite mountain.

FRACASTRO sitting near the buttress of one of the arches.

Fra. (examining a rose.) There is more beauty in
this rose's lip,
Than in the bloom of Atalanta's cheek.
The signor said—"there's something in that boy,
I cannot comprehend." The eye, the lips, the cheek,
Look'd feminine ;—and yet it cannot be :
A boy he is ; and half an idiot too.

Sweet is the murmur of the surge; and soft
The dove-clad colouring of the marbled clouds,
Which skirt the rainbow. All Circassia, too,
Seems as if wafting blossoms to impregn
Yon vine-clad labyrinths;—such delicious scents
Pass through this valley. “Stay thee here, Fracastro;”
Said the lorn signor. “Stay thee here. Ere midnight
I shall return.” Alas—’tis midnight now.

[Takes up some papers, and begins to examine them.]

The poet’s panacea is the page.

[Several nightingales heard among the branches.]

Of all the birds, that charm the listening woods,
The best and holiest is the nightingale.
In Greece, in Cyprus, and in Syria,
Oft have I listen’d to their ecstasies;
While o’er the east, in solemn state, the moon
Tinged every cloud with most bewitching hue,
And o’er the shadowy scene such glory threw,
That Nature, on her own magnificence,
In silent rapture gazed.

[Strikes the chords of his lyre; on which the nightingales resume their notes.]

How sweet this music! surely notes so soft

Ne'er lull'd the night to ravishment. Such sounds,
 —The birds' sweet warble, and the sea's soft flow,—
 Were never blended in a quire so rich;
 Since night first threw her dark, mysterious, veil
 O'er Adam's lids; and, from his rifted side,
 Blood flowed; Eve sprang to life; and Love
 Shed holy raptures o'er the universe.
 Each wave gives strength and solemn intonation;
 Each bird gives melody and grace; both join'd,
 Create a harmony beyond all thought;
 And I—I only—seem awake to listen.

*[Several stags pass under the arches, grazing.
 Others are seen moving, timidly, among the
 branches. Some stop to drink at a small
 fountain, overhung with olives, sycamores, and
 mountain-ash.]*

Rove on, ye antler'd tenants of the forest:
 I would not gore your haunches for a lyre,
 Strung by the fingers of Calliope.
 No;—may these scenes to you for ever be
 The scenes of plenty and tranquillity.
 Ah—would the signor but return! To him
 Hope whispers—never! His fate a wilderness
 Of doubt and sorrow; and his forehead stamped

With all, that hate and jealousy could wish.
 As a lone dervise o'er Numidian wilds,
 Tongue-chain'd with heat, pursues his breathless way,
 Columns of sand stalk, hideous, to the clouds ;
 While serpents fork, and bearded lions roar.
 At length a mirage charms his visual nerve.
 Hope smiles ;—the harlot ! Soon the simoon comes,
 Throwing its sultry winding-sheet ; and all
 Is one vast, suffocating, scene of death !

*[A breath of air flows from the valley, scattering
 a shower of wild rose-leaves ; and the lyre,
 moved by the wind, emits a melancholy sound.]*

Never did Eolus play upon a harp,
 More wildly or more tenderly. Not e'en,
 When through the valley of the Hebrus, Thrace
 Heard solemn sounds ; and every shepherd mourn'd
 To see the lyre, and bleeding head of Orpheus,
 Borne on its strings adown the echoing stream,
 In times long past. In modern days, I've heard,
 Lyres only breathe aerial music, when
 A lover's spirit springs from earth to heaven.

Rom. (without.) Angel of light !

Fra. His voice !—where ? whither ? list.

Rom. (without.) Angel of light !

Fra. Yon vast, projecting, rock
Echoes so wildly and so strangely, that
I know not whence these awful sounds—

Rom. (without.) Francesca!

Fra. A spirit seems to animate the mist.
Some fatal thought distracts his feverish brain.
Methought, I heard deep thunder in the distance.
I must away; a storm is gathering near.
Is it not?—yes—it must be! If I pause
One short-lived moment, he is lost for ever.
What canst thou mean?—destruction! Signor;—signor!
[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Eastern side of the ruins; with Mount Vesuvius rising immediately above; its summit illumined by the moon, now at the full; and its girdle enveloped in clouds; which, in a few moments, rise to the top, and shut it from the scene.

On one side, SARDO, CEBELLO, PEDRO, &c. &c. are

seen reclining against the outward wall of the Castle, asleep.

On the extreme edge of a promontory, jutting into the bay, ROMANO is beheld, sometimes bending over the water, and at others stretching his arms towards heaven.

Rom. As I bend o'er these melancholy waves,
My soul seems starting to a new existence.
If in this bay I throw this worthless frame,
One moment past,—and straight my anxious soul,
Quitting this complicated scene of dust,
Shall join the sainted spirit of Francesca.
Leave me; nay, leave me; leave me to my fate.

Fra. (entering.) When waves quit ocean; when the
stars quit heaven.

Some demon, signor, strives to master thee.
Pause, and reflect:—the volume of thy life
Lies, like a flower-bud, folded in the winter,
Unseen, unknown.—All mystery!—Be wise.
Passion to-day—repentance on the morrow!
If, by this act, thou couldst command the future;
Then it were wise. But since the future is

Even more charged with mystery than the present,
 Live and sustain. Or, if thou must die, let
 Thy death be useful: choose an end more glorious.
 Haste to Lepanto. There the crescent shines
 High o'er the cross; and Venice droops precarious.
 Haste, haste; and perish in thy country's cause.

Rom. (aside.) I know not whether I'm on earth or
 air;

In cave or sea; in heaven or in hell.

Fra. If man loves justice, Heaven respects it too.
 We learn more wisdom in the agony
 Of one short year, than in all former years
 —Though years were ages—if those years are lapt
 In the hard quarry of prosperity.

When feel we more true heritors of heaven,
 Than when afflictions bend us to the earth,
 Modest and awe-struck? Trust to heaven, and live.

Rom. I stand like Niobe, in a vale of wrong;
 Not dull, cold porphyry; but sensitive
 As quivering magnet. Say—the justice? None.
 Faults? twice ten thousand. Crime? as pure and
 clear of,

As the white petals of the myrtle, torn
 From this grey cliff, and by soft zephyrs borne

No one knows whither. Let us scan one petal.

[Takes one from the rock.]

Gaze on its unmix'd purity. Not clearer—

I say, 'tis not more clear of spots, than I am.

Why, then, should I be martyr'd thus? Mysterious!

Fra. Wormwood and upas, tempests and tornadoes;
Tigers and crocodiles, vampires and constrictors;
Blights, mildews, cankers; fevers, dropsy, frenzy;
All—have their uses in the plan, stupendous,
On which the universe is formed. Be sure,
When Fortune steeps a good man in Asphaltus,
'Tis but to medicate his soul for heaven.
If deep the depth, 'twere better—better, still,
The depth were deeper. Hear me, signor; hear.

Rom. My Pylades; my Nestor; my Achates;
My Mentor and Telemachus! Were fate
Pregnant with every treasure of the world,
Moon, stars, or universe itself, it could,
In the lorn tempest of misfortune, give
No boon so rich, so sacred, as a friend.

*[Seizes the hand of FRACASTRO with great fer-
vency; leads him to the bottom of the scene;
and there stands, for a few moments, with his
eyes turned toward heaven.]*

May th' all-holy Virgin bless thee ! May
Succeeding ages honour thee ! May Heaven,
When life has dwindled to the last, last, span,
Reward thy spirit with eternal rest !
I stand admonish'd : Life is no man's own,
To have, or not have, as his passions suit.
Thou dost not know,—and may'st thou never know,—
The secret tortures of a wounded spirit.
Not Philoctetes, in his desert isle ;
Ixion, Sisyphus, or Tantalus ;
Not e'en Prometheus, rivetted, with brain
Downward to earth, while green salt waves beneath
Gave hideous appetite to vultures, gorging
On his wrung entrails, ever felt such tortures,
As my heart suffers, when my soul reflects,
How many an upright honourable man,
How many a pure and spotless woman holds
My name,—once honour'd,—in disgust and horror.
The poisonous judgments of the base I spurn ;
But before those—like yours, my sacred father !
Yours, my dear mother !—yes, like yours, like yours !
I bend in awful reverence. I 'm admonish'd.
My judgment slumber'd : think of it no more :
And what thou here hast seen betray to no man living.

Fra. Never—so help me grace!

Rom. I'm awe-struck;—palsied.
Not two hours since, I had—again!—a vision.
I feel the agony of it still; and seem,
E'en now, as standing on some midnight watch-tower,
Fearing to fall. I heard a voice cry "*Murder!*"
"*Rise, rise!*" "*Revenge!*" "*the scorpion is awake!*"
"*Arise!*" "*its fangs drop poison on thy lips!*"
I'd rather die,—I would by Heaven!—I'd die,
Rather than thrill beneath another dream
So dread as that. For when I heard those words,
Methought some demon seized my frenzied hair,
Led me, all petrified, down a hanging steep,
And placed me, nerveless, underneath; when, lo!
I felt its waters, drop by drop, fall down
On this bare head; till madness seized my brain:
When, starting upward with the agony,
I called Francesca, and I thought she heard.
On which I rush'd to yon projecting point;
And there stood trembling;—but the rest you know.
I say, I would not—such another dream—
Oh earth, oh grave!—ye were a paradise,
For living nerves, to what my soul did suffer!

Fra. (*aside.*) I must divert him from this sorrow.

Mark,

Mark, how the moon-beams gild those clouds of jet.
 Now roll the volumes in dark masses; now
 Venus glows brilliantly; while, towering high,
 Orion stretches wide athwart the concave sky.

Rom. (aside.) A palm, an almond,—nay a bramble,—
 stript

Of bud, foliage, fruit; blossom, bark, nay root.
 My voice,—'tis shatter'd:—scarce resembling man's:
 Like the hoarse twanging of a bow-string; or
 A wizard echo from a ruin'd temple.

Fra. Wilt thou not look? Behold yon glorious scene.

Rom. 'Tis glorious.

Fra. Did you see it, you would think so.

Rom. (aside.) In the clear morning of our lives, when
 hope

Gilds every circumstance, and life breathes joy,
 Sorrow has charms; and melancholy gems,
 With drops sublime, the lids of pensive pleasure.
 But in life's autumn, like the searching blast,
 That o'er the heath the friendless thistle scatters
 Hither and thither; it distracts the soul,
 And steeps our manhood in the mist of age.

Fra. See, sir; behold, Vesuvius appears;
 Like unto Atlas, Athos, or Olympus;
 Huge as a planet:—while, around his head,

Clouds in illuminated fleeces roll,
Like to the fourfold satellites of Jove;
Orb within orb; eclipsing and eclipsed;
Imparting grandeur e'en to heaven itself.

Rom. Magnificent! oh Nature!—how my heart
Dissolves and thrills, impregn'd with admiration,
When, as I contemplate thy miracles,
I think on death, and woo the distant skies.

Fra. A flash! another! and another! See,
See, sir; how quickly Nature shifts her forms.
'Tis thus with fortune; gloomy, gay, tumultuous;
Warfare and peace; despair and hope;—a scene
For ever changing, yet for ever constant.

Rom. (*calls.*) Sardo!—He sleeps:—could I but sleep
as well,
I'd traverse Syria, and the sultry Ind,
The swarthy Congo, and the solitudes,
—Vast and horrific,—of the parched Sahara.
Lightning again! The echoing thunder roars
Harsh music to harsh bosoms; but to me
A soft, mysterious, melancholy, music.
Ah, Griffen-Grooven! thou 'rt alarm'd I see.
This prophesies a tempest, such as reigns,
Even amid these Apennines, but seldom.
There was a time,—how wild the volumes roll,

Echoing from one deep valley to another ;
Now dying in faint murmurs.—Hush'd the scene !

Fra. So die the tumults of an injured spirit,
When time has lull'd each passion into peace.

Rom. Mine will ne'er rest, till death dissolves the
scene.

When the loud thunder shakes the midnight waste,
O'er vast savannahs of mimosa, near
The reeds of Niger, Gambia, or the Zaf ;
In his dark hut, the sable savage hears
Th' horrific tumult. Trembling to the sod
Breathless he clings ; so I—alas !—I need not
Dwell on the picture :—you 're a poet ;—you
Can trace a likeness, where the world sees none.
But who are those, that rush, all terrified,
Athwart those ruins ?

Fra. They approach. Good Heaven !
Was ever lightning e'er beheld like this ?

*[A thunderbolt strikes the keep of the Castle, and
several fragments fall into the moat below.]*

*[LORENZO and LAVINIA rush from behind ; and
seeing ROMANO, &c. stand, for some moments,
lost in amazement.]*

Are we on earth ? or stand we in the clouds ?
I know not which. All faculty is lost,

In contemplation of a scene so awful.
 You, who stand, petrified, entranced; are ye
 Of this dull earth? or do these eyes behold
 Spirits of air?

Lor. We ask the same of you.

Rom. Then ye are mortal. Marco, Sardo, wake!
 The world in ruins, and ye hear it not.

[SARDO, MARCO, &c. &c. start up.]

Who art thou, sir? and who this trembling maid?
 Are ye from Naples? (*aside.*) Let them answer, "No."

Lav. We are from Naples; and I hope that name—

Rom. (*aside.*) My oath sits heavy on my heart!—

Thy name!

Lav. Lavinia, sir.

Lor. (*aside.*) Nay, fear not. Speak:—thy voice
 Would draw a tear from Hercules:—speak on.

Lav. We ask thee nothing, sir, but leave to sit
 Beneath these arches, till the storm has spent
 The wildest of its fury. This is all
 The boon we ask. Support me, or I fall.

Lor. Lean on this arm, my sweet Lavinia.—Sir,
 The maid is sinking with fatigue and fear.

Rom. (*aside.*) Francesca fainted in the arms of Death!
 Nothing to me but fury and rack-wheels.

No hope ; no justice ; neither help, nor pity.

Yet, if he meet one question, as he ought——

There was a nobleman of Venice, who

Once lived at Naples ; and his name, ROMANO.

Where is he now ?

Lor. I know not.

Rom. Didst thou know him ?

Lor. Not in his person ; but in fame—too well.

Rom. (to FRACASTRO.) Did you mark that ? I would
the earth were naphtha !

Know you the secret of his history ?

Lor. Well.

Rom. Wouldst thou impart it ?

Lor. Versions of his deeds—

Rom. Versions are numerous of his deeds, no doubt.

Sit on this column, lady :—thou art weary.

Versions are numerous of every deed,

Good, bad, great, little ; known and unknown ; thou

Wilt tell the truth. I love the truth, good signor.

Lor. Not more than I do.

Rom. Then thou art a wonder.

Lady, permit a chamois-hunter, rough,

Wild as the stag, and graceless as the hawk,

To sit beside thee. It is long since I

Sojourn'd in palaces, 'mid busts and statues,
 Torsos, and ensigns of heroic deeds.
 'Tis long, too, since I sate in gothic hall,
 With lords and ladies, all return'd from chase,
 Listening till morn, to hear some minstrel tune
 Crusaders' fortunes to his flowing harp.
 Nature, for many a long, long, tedious year,
 Has form'd my canopy.

Fra. And he, who once,
 Reclined on couch of purple, watch'd the tints
 Of day's last scene, while sea-girt Venice rung
 With the wild song of happy gondolier:
 He, who once sat—all sympathy—'mid the tombs
 Of Rome's proud reign, to which the evening star
 Gave life and grace and lustre: he,—
 Who slept on down, and drank nectarian cream,
 Now sleeps on rocks, and quaffs the mountain stream.

Rom. Pardon, then, lady, if I fail in grace,
 And all that renders social life a garden,
 Flowing with honey. (*To FRACASTRO.*) Am I fit? nay,
 tell me—
 Say—am I fit to hear a history, fraught
 With truth and untruth? I am not. I loathe
 To hear my name, mine honest name, abused.

I've drain'd the cup of sorrow to the bottom.

Alas the time! Be curious, and listen.

Let not one solitary word escape

The precincts of thine auricle. Begin.

Lor. He woo'd a royal virgin to his bed.

Rom. No lack of fortune, then? no lack of rank?

Lor. Rich, noble, liberal, and approved: and yet,
The midnight murderer of the wife that loved him.

Rom. That is a compound, which the world ne'er
dreamt of.

Lor. Rich, noble, liberal, and yet—an assassin!

Rom. (*starting up.*) It is impossible, I say.

Fra. (*to ROMANO.*) These words,

These looks and gestures, will betray thee, signor.

Rom. When the soul's rack'd, there's no discretion.—

Thanks.

The world is all mine enemy:—Thou knowest it.

Untouch'd, unsullied, I was once a MAN;

Not in the form and symmetry alone,

But in the honest sanctuary of the heart.

This cursed charge!—Mine ears are all obedience.

Lor. A few short years—(a child had graced their
union)—

Some vile, insidious devil, in his malice,

Whisper'd Romano, that his wife had sent
Three several tokens to Schidoni.

Rom. (to FRACASTRO.) Never!

Fra. Yet if you wish to hear a tale, unvarnish'd,
Clear in the mirror of its own report,
'Twere best to listen patiently.

Rom. I will.

That is, if possible. The saw draws blood
At every stroke:—no weeping. I disdain
Tales, that appear improbable and vain.
Once more permit me, lady,—to be seated.

Lor. If I speak false, correct me. If you know
This history well, why ask me to relate it?

Rom. Sardo! why, man, thou hast a horse's face!

What canst thou mean?
For heaven's sake,
Never make
Such a horse's face again!

Nay, my good signor, never mind my nonsense.
I may laugh, when I can laugh; since I laugh but seldom.
I've no bad meaning, I assure thee, sir.
Proceed: I'll interrupt no more. All tales—
All tales of horror have some humour in them;
And Sardo put on so grotesque a face,
And look'd so like a horse—Proceed, proceed.

Lor. You've put me out. I know not where I was.

Rom. You said, Schidoni had received some tokens—

Lor. Soon after that, Romano gave a banquet,
And many a noble slept within his palace;
'Mongst whom was Signor Angelo, my father.

Rom. (*aside.*) Curious and strange! I well remember
him.

He was thy father, was he?

Fra. (*whispering.*) Signor—signor!

Rom. I knew Romano; and I loved him—therefore—

Lor. Loved him or not; you ask the truth:—I tell it.
If aught there shall be of offence in that,
Say so:—I cease. At dead of night, as all—

Rom. He had a child, I think, you said:—still living?

Lor. The child was miss'd, and has not since been
heard of.

Rom. (*aside.*) I am the most, most hapless man
that lives!

Go on;—I shall not interrupt again.

Lor. At dead of night, as all asleep they lay,
Romano stole into the armoury.
Such is the tale; and such is my belief.

[ROMANO turns from LORENZO; and moves behind one of the columns, where he stands, unseen by any one, except FRACASTRO, a few

*moments; caressing his hawk with one hand,
and striking his breast, in great agony, with
the other.*

Fra. The hawk's entangled. He'll return this moment.

Go on;—he'll hear.

Lor. As all asleep they lay,
Romano stole into the armoury.

Schidoni saw him. For, on that sad night,
The villain slept,—by artful invitation—

Rom. Oh, then, you will confess he was a villain?

Lor. Confess! There never lived a greater; never:
If we except the man of whom we're speaking.

Rom. (to FRACASTRO.) Take thou this dagger:—he
afflicts me sorely.

Take it; or else I may disgrace myself.

Now, sir——

Lor. Upon that memorable night,
Schidoni slept beneath Romano's roof.
He sat up later than his host; and as
He pass'd along the corridor to his chamber,
He saw a shadow on the wall.

Rom. Saw what?

Lor. Romano's shadow.

Rom. (aside.) Matchless!—matchless!—matchless!
Dost thou believe all this?

Lor. Why not?

Rom. Go on.

Lep. (to FRACASTRO.) He smiles! I never saw a
smile——

Fra. A tear
Were bliss—nay rapture—to a smile like that.

Rom. He saw Romano's shadow on the wall——

Lor. Then he beheld him stealing to the chamber,
Where his wife lay; as if, distrusting silence,
He fear'd his shadow should betray, and act
As a sure evidence of the horrid deed,
His thought had compass'd; and, 'fore all the world,
Stamp him the model of a fiend.

Rom. Romano?

Lor. Ay;—e'en Romano:—once pronounced the
best,

Bravest, and noblest of the sons of Venice.

Fra. Oft have I heard my mother say so, too.

Rom. May the great gods deliver me! Thy mother?
The grave's a palace, when the soul's a dungeon.
She died,—for which I thank the gods above!—
She died, unconscious of her brother's wrong.

Fra. (aside.) My soul weeps balm to hear him speak
so fondly

Of my poor mother.

Rom. Well—the shadow! Nay—

Lor. He saw him shut the chamber door; and then—

Rom. What then? Be brief.—He racks my soul!
What then?

Lor. Loud shrieks of murder echoed through the
palace.

The guests all rush'd upon the corridor:

Alarm and horror in each face.

Rom. The sequel?

(Aside.) That is, if rage permit my soul to listen.

Lor. The guests all rush'd upon the corridor;
Where, like a statue, they beheld Romano,
Holding a bleeding dagger in his hand:
That fatal dagger, which had pierced the breast
Of one, who loved him as her life. With eyes
Instinct with fury, and with voice scarce human,
“*Where is the fiend, the matchless fiend, Schidoni?*”
Rung and re-echoed through the palace. Lost,
Frantic with guilt, at length he saw him. Fierce,
Fierce as a Caffre in the burning zone
Of ebon Afric, when a hideous asp,

As he lies panting in the sultry shade,
Has pierced his veins ; and poison'd blood descends
Down from his temples to his matted loins,
In many an agonizing stream ;—Romano,
Fierce as the Caffre, sprang upon Schidoni,
Dragg'd him, all breathless, to the fatal chamber ;
And, in the presence of the bleeding body,
Laid the foul charge of murder upon him.

Rom. (aside.) Ye mighty powers! I hope ye listen.

Well—

Lor. Lost in amazement at the frightful scene,
My father rush'd to wrong'd Schidoni's aid,
Wrested the dagger from Romano's hand,
And, with the aid of others, who were present,
Gave him, all reeking with his wife's warm blood,
Mix'd with large drops of agonizing sweat,
Which burst, all copious, from his breast and forehead,
Into the hands of th' officers of justice.

Rom. Seize him, I charge ye ! Bind him fast. He is
Of that proud, worthless, miserable, harlot,
Naples the curst. All mercy, therefore, dies,
Pity and hope, and every humane feeling.

Lav. What has he done? what utter'd to offend?
He has said nothing but the sacred truth ;
And that, too, at thine own express'd command.

Rom. Art thou, too, turn'd accuser? Thou—a woman!

Lav. What, in the name of fortune, canst thou mean?

Rom. Mean? Said he not, I stabb'd my wife?
Deny it?

Said he not that? deny ye that?—He said it.

I'd stake my life upon the word. Fracastro,

Did he not say, I slew my wife? You know it.

Lor. Not so.—I said—

Lav. He said, Romano did it.

Rom. Well—who is he?

Lav. Who is he?

Rom. Ay;—who is he?

Who—but the man before thee?

Lor. and Lav. Thou—Romano?

Rom. I;—I;—the outcast; the condemn'd, scorn'd,
outcast:

The fugitive, the murderer;—the fiend,

Let loose from hell to assassinate an angel.

Yes—I'm Romano; and I love the name;

Although 'tis hiss'd and hooted at in Naples.

Oh the vile race—how I abhor them!—Gods!

I have no language to describe the horror,

With which my soul regards them. Past all speech:

Past all conception. Had they heard my tale,
 And through blind error judged me guilty; then,
 Although most cruelly, and most fatally, wrong'd;
 Then, then, indeed, I had respected, pardon'd;
 And, in the anguish of affliction, wept
 O'er human judgments. As it is, may earth—
 May earthquakes, wars, both foreign and domestic,
 Famine and pestilence, visit them for ages!
 Haste;—do your duty;—I have said;—it shall be.

[Strikes the earth with great violence.]

Lor. Lions, and pards, and caracals, I've heard of;
 Tigers and serpents; but I never yet
 Heard of a man, who—

Rom. Out! The furies! What—
 What cares Romān, what you, or any one,
 Hears, or has heard? He is a man so wrong'd,
 He cares for none;—an empire to himself!
 That is my answer; and let that short word
 Suffice for thee, for Naples, and for all men.
 You!—had not your officious, credulous, father
 Rescued the dagger from my grasp, SCHIDONI,
 He,—the villain,—he, the fiend,—SCHIDONI,
 Had lain, all crimson, at my spurning feet.
 Marco, come hither.

[Whispers.]

Marco (to SARDO, &c.) Pray be silent: who
Can hear instructions, if ye murmur thus?
Once more, good signor.—It is done: it shall be.
(To LORENZO.) You must with me, sir: ay, indeed you
must.

Nay, sir, 'tis vain:—too many for your strength.

You must with us; the signor wills it so.

Lav. They shall not part us; we will die together.

Rom. Take the maid hence: I war not with a woman.

Fra. (to LAVINIA.) No power shall harm thee, as I
hope for grace.

I shall defend thee. Come, fair lady; fear not.

[*Exeunt.*

Rom. (*solus.*) Oh that the father of yon boundless
deep

Would wrap his spirit in some sea-girt cliff,

Round which the winds, waves, lightnings, and tornadoes,

Might, in fierce chaos, tyrannize for ages!

What sounds are these? a mutiny! *Durate.*

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Corridor of the Castle.

Enter MARCO and SARDO, leading LORENZO, who struggles violently; FRACASTRO supporting LAVINIA; CERELLO, and others, following reluctantly. Exeunt.

Enter ROMANO; gazing anxiously after them.

Rom. There was a time my soul had shrunk from
this,

Like the grey Nylgau of the Caucasus,
Under the strength and hunger of the leopard.
Now,—the unutterable anguish!—now
Storms lose their power, and lightnings all their force.
Soul of my being, what is this? Francesca?
Angel of love! I kneel to hear thine errand.
See, see;—mid yon magnificent expanse,
Like a wing'd spirit, she ascends; while I,
Chain'd to this congregated mass of dust,
Live without life, and breathe as one condemn'd
To every torture, that the soul can bear.
And what beyond can I presume, or hope for?

Till I am purged of that dark crime, which sits,
In awful judgment, on my heart.—T' intrude
My angry passions, my impatient darkness,
Oh most presumptuous! on the God, that made me;
Who gave me rank amid the vast creation,
Hopes to indulge, and duties to fulfil;
Who gave me reason for a guide, and curb,
Over my passions; and who deign'd to use
Me, me,—unworthy as I am!—to work
Some visible portion of his high designs.
—Designs, the final purposes of which
I can distinguish, fathom, or imagine,
No more than petrels, skimming 'twixt two surges,
Can span the width, or sound the depth sublime,
Of the vast ocean, that they glide upon.
Oh monstrous, ignorant, insolent, presumption!
Down on this earth I cast myself. Come, Death,
Come,—thou terrific herald of the grave,—
With all thy mighty multitude of horrors,
Come, and reduce me into nought. Since I
Feel all unworthy of the dust I lie on;
I must be more so of eternal life.

[*Thunder heard in the remote distance.*

The storm still lingers, and the lightning flies.

Would it return, and melt me into nothing !
Annihilation were a boon most strongly,
Nay, e'en most wisely, to be wish'd and pray'd for.
Lie down, tired head, upon this mossy stone ;
Close fast, mine eyes, and never wake again ;
Rest, rest, my soul, and trouble me no more.

Enter FRACASTRO.

Fra. As a lone shepherd, who, on Alpine heights,
Has, from on high, beheld the lightning strike
A bark, deep labouring in the gulf below,
Drives his flock homeward down the craggy steep,
And thanks the fates, his wife and children are housed,
And comfort reigning round his humble hearth.
So mid the ruins, that around us lie,
We gather wisdom from another's woe,
And read a blessing in our own pure strength.
Could I but give some portion of that strength,
By whispering comfort to his care-worn heart,
I were musician equal to Marsyas.

[Strikes the chords of his lyre.

Rom. Music brings memory, misery, and madness !

Fra. Speak, speak, my lyre. While grief subdues
his soul,

Let thy soft warblings vibrate on each sense,
 As morning rays on Memnon's marble form ;
 Or harp Eolian on the ear of those,
 Whom Death has robb'd of every living hope.
 Breathe soft, my lyre ; and modulate such strains,
 That pain may sleep, and hope awake to listen.

(Penseroso).

The time will come, when weal and woe
 Shall cease to agitate thy frame ;
 When tears of blood shall cease to flow,
 And leave thee nothing but their name.
 When all thou 'st heard ; when all thou 'st felt and thought,
 Shall,—like a vision,—dissipate to nought

Enter LAVINIA, in a wild and distracted manner.

'Tis not the time to urge thy fortunes now.
 Let him not see thee. Hush ! no thanks ; nay—hush !
 Sit on this column, and behold how much
 The tale, he heard, has shatter'd him ; and left
 His soul a martyr to an inward anguish,
 Never yet felt by innocence before.

(Con spirito.)

Those lightnings swift, those thunders loud,
 That shook the vast ethereal void,
 Proclaim a fate for thee as proud,
 As ever angel hath enjoy'd.

Raise, then, thy soul; and lift thy hopes as high,
As those proud heralds of thy destiny.

*[Thunder rolls with great violence; and the
waters are heard rushing from the mountains.*

Hark—how the eagles scream among the crags,
Owls mock the midnight, and wolves howl in terror.
Regain the bosom of the ruin;—haste.

[Exit LAVENIA.

*[MARCO, SARDO, &c. &c. rush in from all
quarters of the scene.*

Rom. (rising.) The moon's eclipsed! Behold her
glowing front

Bronzed to an Ethiop with affright and horror.

These sounds must surely wake the slumbering dead.

A storm more awful, never rocked the earth!

Retire;—all nature, in convulsion, seems

Bewilder'd, terrified, and paralyzed.

Death, warfare, ruin, and eternal chaos,

Govern all space. (*To FRACASTRO.*) A deadly night-
mare sits

Over my soul, more terrible than death!

T' intrude my passions, my impatient passions—

Hence, hence, retire; and let the tempest fall

On my head sole; my long-devoted head;

Till death itself shall strike, and stop the pulse from
beating. [Exeunt SARDO, &c. &c.

Lo—in the vale, below yon crested crags,
Bosom'd in silence, far remote from strife,
The solemn arches of Salvator's cloisters
Rise o'er the darkness; lighting up for matins.
There peace, there faith, there hope, there charity,
Blossom with ever-during love; and there,
Perchance, some grace may vegetate for me.
Guide me, ye lightnings, like some watch-tow'r, hung
To light the midnight vessel on its way,
When winds and waves contend with hideous roar,
Which shall be sovereign of the watry waste.

[Exit.

Fra. Gone? like an arrow. Sardo! Marco! hither.

[They enter.

Let us go watch: He has outlived all prudence.

[Exeunt.

[Thunder heard raging with great violence among
the mountains; and then gradually dying
away in the distance.

BOOK V.

SCENE I.

A Chapel surrounded by large yew trees, near the monastery of Salvator.

Graves covered with shrubs and flowers.

Enter SCHIDONI from the porch.

Schid. Years fifty-three I've traversed this dull globe,
Yet never witness'd such a storm before.

[Chimes strike the quarters.

Enter the FISHERMAN from the porch.

Where are the keys and harp?

Fisherman. In the porch. (*Aside.*) Where should they be? 'Twas well, signor, we got here before the rain began, or the storm had drowned us; as sure as little fishes bolt in the jolt.

Schid. What said Theresa, when she read my note?

Fisherman. Not a word, signor. She toddled up stairs, brought down the harp and keys; gave them to me with a shrug;—yes, signor, she shrugged up her shoulders thus; shut the door; and that without saying a word; as if she took me for a thief. Ill-mannered old harridan! I didn't loike it. My old Margery could have behaved better than that.

Schid. Insolent jade! The covering, and the harp.—

[*Exit FISHERMAN.*

Now for Romano, down the valley yonder.

Re-enter FISHERMAN with the harp, &c.

Fisherman. There, signor; there they are. (*Aside.*) I wonder what in the name of St. Dominic, he can want these things for.

Schid. (aside.) These keys; this harp:—I shall disguise my form;

Darken this face;—my mother could not know me!

What—pluck the flowers, and put them in thy pouch?

What is that for?—

Fisherman. Why, signor, you must know, that I have a poor little boy and a nice little girl, lying quietly in our church-yard, side by side; and I was thinking as

how I would take these sprigs home with me, and throw them over their graves. I think they would loike it, poor little things; they would look so pretty. That's all, signor; nothing else; nothing else in the world, signor; nothing else.

Schid. I'd give some ducats to be like this man, Though he's so poor.—The monks at matins: hark! They chant like angels; and no doubt they are such. Haste;—hie thee home: take this, and this; no parley. Give my regards to Margery. Five ducats.

Fisherman. God bless thee, signor; and may thee never want a cot or a coat, a trout or a pout, a chick, a chidling, or a biddling. Aha—how my old Margery will wince! Aha—how my fish-dried old Margery will wince! She'll throw another old petticoat into the water; I warrant her. [*Exit.*

Schid. I must away. Kind walls, farewell;—farewell! Never give shelter to a man again, That hates all bishops, popes, and saints, as I do.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Interior of the Chapel.

Several Monks kneeling in the oratories; other Monks, passing in procession; two going before, scattering incense.

HYMN* :—MATINS.

Now the silent stars, descending,
Sink behind the western wave,
We and all the world are wending
To the soft and silent grave.
Holy Virgin, save,—oh save!
Save our hearts and souls from falling;
Take our thanks for hopes to-day;
May the morning's worldly calling,
Speed us on our heavenly way.
Holy Virgin,—pray, oh pray
At night, at morn, at noon of day,
Oh may thy mercy lead, and smooth the heavenly way!

[Exeunt Monks; chanting as they move.]

[Verger puts out all the lights, except those on each side the crucifix. Exit.]

* This hymn is a translation, or rather a paraphrase, from the Spanish; and is the only imitation of which the author is conscious. It has been set to one of the most beautiful airs of Mozart, by Reddie; and may be had of Dale, music-seller, in the Poultry. Title; a HYMN to the VIRGIN.

Enter ROMANO, bare-foot, bearing a tablet.

Rom. Sweet was the music, hovering o'er the glen !
 This is Death's palace :—here he sits enthroned ;
 With Truth and Justice for his counsellors.
 On earth all fade :—mid life's delirious round
 All wither ;—die. While here,—in solemn peace,
 Rest, and forgetfulness of earth,—the soul
 Quickens anew to fructify in heaven.
 Ah—what is life ? harsh tumult.—Death ? *Resurgam.*
 Such was my hope ;—my apprehension now.
 Hark !—'Tis the closing of the chapel-door.
 How the vaults echo !—Like a catacomb,
 Holding the bones of empires in its womb,
 When the last trump shall sound the death of time.
 List—list—the hour ? These chimes how musical !
 Now the morn's watch-words :—one, two, three, four,
 five.
 How awful sounds the fleeting voice of time,
 Amid these consecrated walls. *Memento !*
 In solemn awe and reverence I approach'd
 These walls so hallow'd ! where all proudly tell
 —Graves, tablets, monuments,—that man was made
 For scenes far nobler than a sphere, where care,
 Insult and injury, anguish and remorse,

Compose one vast, one melancholy volume.
 As on this tablet, I inscribe the name
 Of her, who form'd my paradise on earth,
 Flow sweet, my tears; flow inwardly; and wash
 The deep-wrought agonies of my soul away.

[*Contemplates the monuments.*]

This is the tomb of one, who died for love:
 And this of one, who, in a sea of blood,
 Sought the base phantom—military glory.
 And who art thou, that caused this speaking glass
 To decorate thy tomb? an epitaph!

*Earth is man's cradle, theatre, and grave;
 The mean material, which comports his flesh;
 But not,—thank heaven!—the essence, which contains
 Life, mental motion, or the soul sublime.*

[*Takes up the hour-glass.*]

This is Time's ensign:—Time will soon be o'er!
 To quit this fragile tenement of clay;
 To rise,—all spirit,—in a space unknown;
 Traverse, perchance, a universe of ills,
 And drink new poison, each succeeding change:
 But stay—since life springs blooming out of death,

Truth must, one morning, blossom out of doubt,
And cleanse the soul of mystery and error.

[Replaces the hour-glass.

And who sleeps here? a chorister: and who
Beneath this marble, strew'd with arid bones?

FRANCESCO, *Abbot*;—*ninety-two!* of these
*Seventy he pass'd in frequent watchings, stripes,
Long silence, and continual meditation,
On the seductive pleasures of the world.
Brother!—the relics, which lie scatter'd here,
Were once FRIAR JOHN; who loved the Abbot well,
And will'd his bones to lie upon his tomb.
Touch not the fragments, till to dust they turn.*

[Kneels beside the tomb.

*[The Abbot issues from the chancel; and the
Monks from the oratories.*

Abbot. Some way-worn pilgrim; barefoot and forlorn.

Respect his holy meditation;—Come.

*[Exeunt Monks; the Abbot retires to the
chancel.*

Rom. (rising.) Now all is silence: hush'd is every
sound.

Oh thou fair angel—may this tablet hang
A lasting monument of thy Julio's love!

[*Hangs the tablet on one of the pillars.*]

IN. CÆLO.

FRANCESCA.

AMOR. ET. TRANQUILLITAS.

Enter a Monk, bearing a taper.

Rom. Pater, O pater: miserere mei.

Monk. Frater!—Deus noster refugium.

Rom. In Deo speravi.

Could I hold converse with the reverend abbot?

Monk. Behold him, brother, leaning on a tomb.

Rom. Thanks, holy father. (advancing.) Oh the fatal sight!

Whom do I see? the excellent Father Jerome,
Once the king's priest?

Monk. Now Abbot of Salvator.

[*Exit up the chancel.*]

*Rom. Oh the good virgin! 'tis the reverend priest,
That gave me all I valued upon earth.
He married us; anointed us; and—wept!
He kiss'd our cheeks, and bade us live in peace,*

In hope, charity, sanctity, and love.
 How shall I meet him? He believes me guilty.
 Yes—he believes I slew the saint, he gave me,
 E'en in the sanctity of sleep. He'll spurn me.
 Yet is he good, considerate, and kind,
 To all men living. I will throw myself
 Down at his feet, all penitent: for the crime
 Of having meditated self-destruction,
 Sits like a life-consumer on my soul,
 And wears my heart with agony away.
 Most holy Abbot!—but I dare not go.
 'Tis but to court what most would wound my soul;
 A good man's scorn. I will not. Yet as love
 To all mankind is written on his forehead,
 Perchance some portion is reserved for me.

[Rushes forward, and throws himself at his feet.]

Abbot. Peace, my good brother: why these sobs and
 tears?

Lean on the mercy of thy God;—thy feet
 Shall yet be wash'd; thy wounds shall yet be heal'd;
 Thy rags all purple; and thy spots like snow.

Rom. Hail, holy father:—pardon, reverend abbot.
 These hands of thine,—I know thee well!—bestowed
 A royal virgin to mine arms.

Abbot.

Romano?

Julio Romano? Touch me not;—avaunt!

Thy hands and heart are stain'd with innocent blood;
The pure and spotless,—nay, th' angelic,—blood
Of a sweet saint, who loved thee. Ay—as if
Thou hadst been Raphael, sent express from heaven,
To guide her footsteps to th' empyreal throne.
Avaunt! Begone,—I say, begone,—begone.

Rom. Hear me; nay, hear me, holy father;—hear me!
Heaven holds me innocent of that. But I
Yet have a crime, I burthen to confess.
Francesca dead,—and I—charged of her murder;
Robb'd of my child;—my aged mother struck
With a dumb palsy;—and my father dying
In laughing madness:—nay, respect these tears!
Ruin'd in fame, an outcast from mankind,
Forlorn, disconsolate, and desolate,
Urged too, to madness, by a horrid dream:
Last night, a friend—heaven bless him for his care!
Saw, watch'd, and saved me from myself; or I
Had thrown this worthless frame into the flood,
And never more been heard of.—Holy abbot!
All doubts dismiss of every crime but this;
And tell me truly; tell me, excellent father,

Can the same angel, that received Francesca,
Open the gates of Paradise to me?

Abbot. The crime,—committed,—had been past all
pardon.

At least, beyond an abbot's intercession.
But heaven extends benevolence to all,
Who seek by deep repentance.

Rom. Reverend father!

Thou hast pour'd balm and balsam on my soul.
Thou givest me hope :—I could not ask for more.

Abbot. Fly; fly. A price is set upon thy head.
Tempt heaven no farther. Rise, my son :—farewell.
Guilty or not;—my prayers!—since thy hand
I well remember,—Heaven remembers too,—
Was, in the zenith of thy fortune, ever
Free, as the flowers of summer to the bee,
To all, whom fortune frown'd on, round thy garden.

Rom. Father,—thou bring'st such drops into mine
eyes—

Abbot. I could weep, too :—but hence;—I charge
thee—hence.

How could I bear to see thy misery,
Wert thou ta'en hence; and from these sacred walls,
Led,—oh the miserable thought! and led

Fra. Take you the key: some good, perhaps, may
come.

Enter MARCO.

Well;—hast thou found him?

Marco.

I have not.

Fra.

'Tis strange.

See ye where chamois quaff the mountain stream,
Beneath yon rugged Alpine arch?

Sardo.

I do.

Fra. Thither he fled. I follow'd; till he came
Close to the ledge, from which, suspending, weeps
Yon silver'd birch; that like a wizard hangs,
Dipping its leaves within the rippling wave,
And dropping pearls before the lunar ray.
Near where those cygnets, with their mother, rest,
With beaks conceal'd beneath their downy wings.
There he lean'd long in meditation; lifted,
—If by his eyes and countenance I might judge—
In silent awe before the universe.
He stood, methought, like some majestic abbey;
When 'twixt two clouds of purple and vermeil,
The soften'd lustre of the solar beams
Glows o'er its time-worn fragments; and it stands
A venerable emblem of magnificence,

Chasten'd with beauty. Then a rustling wind
Past o'er the torrent; and I look'd; when lo—
A mist arose betwixt us, and he vanish'd.
Come—we must find him ere we sleep.

Sardo. The lady!

Fra. Which way?—I see:—her cheeks bedew'd with
tears.

I promised I would lead her to the captive.
Bring me the fruit.

Sardo. I shall return this moment.

[*Exeunt SARDO and MARCO.*]

Enter LAVINIA.

Lav. As thou dost love thy father, mother, sister,
Brother, and friend; oh lead me to Lorenzo:
And the good deed shall pave thy path to heaven.

Fra. Lady;—nay, fear not; I'll perform my promise.

Enter SARDO, with a basket of fruit.

Take these pomegranates: they may soothe his thirst.
Why dost thou tremble? none shall harm thee here,
While I live free, and can protect thee, lady.
Open the wicket of the cell, good Sardo.

Lav. Angels of grace—Lorenzo ! and in chains ?
Horrid ; most horrid ! (*Runs to him.*) Let me break
these bonds ;

These wretched, execrable, bonds ; or perish.

Lor. This is a joy, I never hoped to see,
On this side heav'n.

Lav. Lorenzo ; my Lorenzo !

Lor. Nay, do not bathe my bosom with thy tears.
Fortune may yet blush deep for these deserts.

These arms may yet sustain thee ; and our love—

Lav. Can we not break these miserable bonds ?
Let us both try. [*They endeavour to break them.*]

Lor. In vain : 'tis all in vain.
Not thrice the compass of such strength as ours
Could break one link. So weak is honest strength,
Unarm'd, opposed to tyranny.

Sardo. The signor !

Enter ROMANO.

Rom. Nay, how is this ? I little thought to find,
Fracastro traitor to his trust.

Fra. No traitor ;
Either to thee, or to myself. Nay more :

I'm no cameleon, to adopt all colours,
Worn by the object, nearest which I stand.
I am no Proteus to assume all shapes;
Nor can I change my humour with my interest:
Mean with the great; obsequious with the vicious;
Honest in nothing. I disdain such men!
Thou art my father,—for I have no other.
Therefore, I owe thee,—as my mother's brother,
Duty, obedience, reverence, and love.
But truth and justice are beyond all ties;
Even of father, mother, master, or—sovereign.
I shall be honest.—Sir! I think, thy fame,
—But let me speak it to thyself alone—

[Draws him aside.]

Calls on thee loudly to redeem this wrong.
You weep for wrongs; yet act the wrong thyself!
I marvel:—nay, I blush for thee:—with blushes,
Wrung from the depth and silence of a heart,
Which hates injustice, as it hates the devil.

Rom. Why, this is honest; and I love thee: yet
Pause one short moment. Hast thou felt—? thou hast
not—

A bleeding martyrdom through all thy nerves,
—Head, heart, and feet,—for nine revolting years?

Hast thou sow'd fame,—an honest fame,—and reap'd
 Envy and treachery, ignominy, and scorn?

Fra. (aside.) Why have I lived to such an hour as
 this?

Rom. Hast thou lost fortune?—that is nothing;—one,
 In whom life centred? Hast thou lost a daughter?
 A sire thou hast lost, and a mother too;
 Not as I mine!—My mother was struck dumb:
 She died in horror; and my father fell,
 In laughing madness, on Francesca's corse.

Fra. (aside.) I've struck the strings too harshly.

Rom. When thou hast
 Endured all these, for nine horrific years;
 Judge me.—Behold me in my ruins!—See—
 I stand like some torn fig-tree of the desert,
 Shorn, shrivell'd, scorch'd; while sultry whirlwinds sweep
 Along th' illuminated face of heaven,
 Blasting the fertilizing strength of nature.
 Was I not chain'd from head to foot? Behold—
 Look at these wrists. When I behold these scars,
 These miserable, blood-stain'd, scars;—I perish!
 Tear but my sandals:—this will never heal.
 Here was I wrung; here were the fetters lock'd;
 Here was I pierced:—May vast volcanoes rise,

Flame o'er their roofs; and bury them in ashes
Sir, you are wrong,—I tell thee, thou art wrong,
To probe my wounds, and play upon me thus.

[*Turns suddenly to LORENZO.*

Wake, sir: no transports. Poison taints the lip
Of those, who drink before they ought. Awake!

Lav. Wrongs have unsex'd me. Hear, thou man of
blood;

Hear, whilst you may. That youth—should'st thou——!
The great Eternal will avenge his cause,
And heap more woes and ruin on thy head,
Than ever fell to one man's lot before.
What has he said? what wrong has he committed?
Let not thy passions tempt thee to a ruin,
Even more dreadful than thou know'st already.
No man acts wrong,—the mightiest monarch acts
Nothing, that's wrong, but soon repents the deed.
This hour, this awful, this horrific, hour,
Alone is thine. The next—Eternity!
And in that dread eternity, who knows
What woes, unheard of, may assail thee? Say—
What crime? what wrong? what injury? Not one!
Why then permit Revenge—the worst of passions—
Thus to disgrace and prey upon thee?—Shame!

Had he done that, which thou hast done thyself,
Thou could'st not;—nay,—what wrong has he com-
mitted?

Rom. Did he not charge me with Francesca's
murder,

With his own lips, and to my face? Deny?
The truth sits pallid on thy cheek; it speaks
In every movement:—He's condemn'd already.

Lav. The guilt is not in saying that you did it;
But in your doing it. If you did it;—how
Came you to do it? 'Twas a deed most horrid!

Rom. Who say, I did it? miscreants. A deed—
Then there's his father, his officious father,
Who took my judgment on himself;—'twas he,
That gave me to the myrmidons, who bound
These innocent hands. Could he—the monstrous
thought!

Could he have struck the angel, that he loved?
At midnight too? when none can guard themselves!
Out, out—the charge, the ignominious charge,
Is scarce inferior to the deed itself.

Lav. Dost thou condemn him for his father's fault?

Rom. He is of Naples: guilt enough for any.
Have I not sworn? and shall I break an oath?

Lav. Sworn what?

Rom. To all the hated sons of Naples,
Bonds, stripes; nay—death.

Lav. Oh frightful—frightful—frightful!

Rom. Worse than condemn an innocent man unheard?

Lor. (*sarcastically.*) Innocent!

Rom. Ay—innocent. Who dares——?

Lav. Is the charge false then?

Rom. False as heaven is true.

When a man stabs a hero, or a—woman!

This is the fatal, this the guilty, hand,

With which he perpetrates the deed:—the spots!

No doubt, thou 'lt see the damning spots of murder.

Look at it;—judge.

Lav. As white as snow.

Rom. Not all,

Not all the waters of the Rhine or Danube,

Tigris, Euphrates, Ganges, Sinde, or Nile,

Congo or Zad: not e'en th' Atlantic waste,

That rolls its waters over continents,

Once the blest seats of empire, arts, and arms,

Could e'er have washed the bloody spots away,

Had I been guilty of a deed so foul,

So monstrous, and so terrible.

And felt, I must be, what the world so long,
 So loudly, has proclaim'd. Come hither: say—
 Can Scythian winters wed Cashmerian suns?
 Or fuschias vermeil 'neath the vast monsoon?
 Can time strew laurels o'er the grave of guilt?
 Or love shed raptures o'er the couch of scorn?
 Yet may the wormwood of a friend's rebuke
 Prove sweet,—nay sweeter,—than th' Hyblean hive.
 Touch but this hand; my heart with pride shall glow.

Fra. Now admiration, reverence, and love
 Again command my soul. I thought thee wrong:
 And,—to speak truth with reverence,—I bled,
 To see thee wrong thy noble nature so.
 That gave a courage to my pity.—Sire!
 Pardon my fault: I'm all submission now.
 See, where they come: bliss lightening in each face.

*[Goes towards LORENZO and LAVINIA; takes
 them by the hand, and leads them to ROMANO.]*

Rom. Kneel not, I charge. Rise instantly: 'tis I—
 I ought to bend, to yield, and sue for pardon.
 I ought to kneel. I've wrong'd ye both. We sin
 Beyond the common measure of a crime,
 When we confound the guiltless with the guilty.
 Give me thy hand, sweet lady; yours, Lorenzo:

May ye be happy in each other's love.
 Good Sardo,—oh the luxury of this deed!—
 Lead them within ; and set before them all
 The fruits, we have; and do not choose, but speak
 In honest praise of that delicious wine,
Lacrymæ Christi. All Anacreon wrote,
 In praise of Bacchus, will be found in that.

[*Exeunt LORENZO and LAVINIA, with SARDO.*

Fra. A blind old man ! Fontano ;—or my fancy
 Rules o'er my judgment.

Rom. Thou art right :—'tis he.
 Alas—how changed from him, who once, like Theseus,
 Bore on his brow the roseate tint of youth,
 And tower'd, like Ajax, more a god than man.
 Let us go round, and meet him at the portal.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*Platform before the portal of the Castle ; with which it
 is connected by a draw-bridge.*

*In the distance stands the keep, presenting a dark, shat-
 tered, aspect, as struck by lightning. Several oak*

and sicamore trees exhibit the same appearance; while, over and along the moat, is a long line of weeping willows, mingled with mulberries and mountain ash, pines, olive and cork trees.

Enter LEPARDO, leading FONTANO and FLOBANTHE; followed by the KING and VERCELLI, disguised as Pilgrims, and bearing pastoral staffs.

Lep. This is the spot. Remain ye here:—I will
Return this instant. Royal sir, forgive
The poverty of the greeting; since 'tis you
Put the command upon me: I'll return
Within a moment, if the signor's here.

[Exit into the castle.]

King (to Vercelli). Wave thy hand gently.

Ver. Sire,—the army answers.

King. Safe then; let him be guilty as he may.

Flor. (aside.)

I shall not now assume the owl,
For them to take me for a fool.
No; I shall take another guise;
And then, perhaps, they'll take me to be wise.

Enter LEPARDO *from the castle, followed by* ROMANO
and FRACASTRO.

Rom. Hail, noble signor; welcome to these walls.
And you, most reverend palmers, hail;—all hail!
Ye found him in the wilderness, I'm told,
And undertook to guide his steps to Venice.
For that my thanks, as well as his. 'Tis many,
Ay, many a year,—since I have seen thee, signor.
Nine, ten, eleven;—yet I should have known
Thy form and countenance, seen thee where I might.
Alas! what crimes have we committed, sire,
That we should be thus martyrdized? What deed,
Just, generous, noble, has Schidoni done,
That he should revel in the power to make
This earth a worthless wilderness to us?

Fon. The storm is temper'd to the guiltless head!

King. Hence the deep sighs and sorrows of to-day
Should act as signs of comfort for the morrow.

Rom. (*aside.*) Then I'm more guilty, than I thought
I was.

Flor. (*aside.*) Now I shall show them, I'm a fool no
longer.

Fra. The boy, I vow, who ran away last night.

Flo. The boy, you took to be an—idiot !

'Tis mean to see a titled crowd,
 All listless, in a palace wait ;
 But sweet to hear the laughter loud
 Of children at a cottage gate ;
 When, from the dingle or the bourn,
 They hail their brother's safe return.

Rom. A fool, a fool ; I took him for a fool !

Flo.

Sweet, sweet, it is ;—but far more sweet,
 For children, sires, and friends, to meet ;
 When Fate has will'd an absence dread,
 Or each believes the other dead.

Fra. Nay, we are brothers, if thou art a poet.
 Let us shake hands. Too delicate for a boy !
 Dig, my young master ; harrow, or keep sheep.
 You'll gain no credit for such hands as those.

Flo. I shall not ask their exercise from you ;
 Of that be sure : and if thou art a poet,
 Quit the dear trade ;—'t will never make thy fortune.

Poets? Alas—their hopes, unblest,
 Forbid their souls to taste of rest.
 In vain the glittering morn appears,
 They wake to pain, they wake to tears.
 In vain the starless nights return ;
 The silence makes their bosoms burn ;
 While listless, restless, wild and wan,
 Through life's harsh scene they wander on.

Fra. I must confess, I took thee for a fool.

Flo. The spacious world is full of wonders. If
The wise turn fools, why may not fools turn wise?
Nay, most men's wisdom, I have heard, is nought,
But folly drest up to a worldling's liking.

Fra. Well—I confess, I took thee for a fool!

(*To ROMANO*) One word with thee, sir. Dost thou
know—? the lady—

Rom. Well; what of her?

Fra. The daughter of Fontano!

Rom. Nay now, thou wear'st the motley coat thyself.

Fra. If she herself knows who her father is,
She is his daughter;—for she told me so.

Rom. (*to FONTANO.*) Signor, with me. Come; follow;
I will show thee,

What will more deeply captivate thy soul,
Than hope can indicate. Good sirs, no parley:
But come at once. The oak, all sear'd and wither'd,
Bud shall as fresh, as when its towering branches
Show'd afar off the sovereign of the forest.
Lilies shall spring, where hemlock once shed poison;
And where old ravens croak'd, young nightingales shall
sing.

Thy daughter—come; I'll lead thee to her; come

Fon. A dream;—a dream!

Rom. Reality. Come on.

I'd give the universe to be as thou art;
Blind; ay, and lame, and indigent, and scorn'd;
The very refuse of the world; could I,
As thou wilt soon, behold a daughter's form,
And drink paternal rapture from her lips.
Nay, not one word;—the pilgrims will excuse thee.

[*Exeunt* ROMANO, FONTANO, &c. &c.]

King. (*to* VERCELLI.) The fair Lavinia in a haunt
like this?

What can this mean? I hope no treason lurks
Beneath a mask of courtesy. Yet truth
Sat on his lips, or Nature is delusive.
Come; let us trust: true confidence is Royal.
Staffs, too, of pilgrims must command some reverence.
Should it prove true, We shall rejoice as much,
As if Rome, Piedmont, Tuscany, and Venice,
All, were united to the throne of Naples.

[*Exeunt.*]

BOOK VI.

SCENE I.

A large Saracenic hall, festooned with ivy, clematis, and other parasitical plants.

On one side stands the statue of FRANCESCA; on the other, a large sepulchral vase, half hid by orange, citron, and pomegranate trees. Round the statue lie several books and chisels; and round the vase a few blocks of porphyry and marble; on which are several musical instruments.

MARCO and BERNARDO *arranging the books, &c.*

Marco. Well, here they are; and safe as in the quarry.

Ber. Was he not charm'd, when he beheld this statue?

Marco. He almost knelt in adoration.—Sardo?

[*Enter SARDO and LEPARDO on one side; and FRACASTRO on the other.*

Fra. What is the matter? why ye look as if
Ye had just risen from the grave. What is it?

Sardo. Yonder;—look yonder. 'Tis a spirit! and
I dare as soon face panthers and hyenas.

It follow'd us from the portal. 'Tis a spirit!

Fra. Mortal, be certain. Ye are children:—born
Of that fierce hydra-headed fiend, which stalks
The beauteous earth, and turns the grace of heaven
Into an insult. Cherish superstition;
And ye distil a poison in your hearts,
In which to drown both reason and religion.
Stand where ye are. I'll speak to him. What a sight!
Lame, bending, scarr'd with many a strange device;
Almost an Ethiop.—Never did I see
A form and visage so unlike the human.

[*Enter SCHIDONI, disguised; playing on a harp.*

Fra. Whence,—and who art thou?

Schid. Lead me to thy chief.

Fra. Whence,—and who art thou?

Schid. Lead me to thy chief!

[*Recommences playing; and with great violence.*

Fra. (to SARDO.) Go, tell the signor. (*Exit SARDO.*)

Didst thou ever hear

A strain like this, Lepardo? If thou hast,

I must confess, I have not.

Lep. 'Tis a spirit;
Risen from the coffin, where his body lies.

Enter ROMANO followed by the Palmers.

Rom. Whence comes this prodigy? who art thou? who?

Fra. Speak, sir. The man seems paralyzed. He
shudders!

'Tis a plain question: why not answer? speak.

Schid. (aside.) As I do live, the awful, well-known,
voice

Palsies me quite.

Rom. Thy name? thy name? thy name?

(Aside.) A thousand spiders crawl within my veins.

His very aspect stings me to the marrow,
Like a torpedo. Pluto's harp!—play on.

[SCHIDONI plays.

Who taught thee that?

Schid. (quitting his harp.) Some horrid hag, no doubt;
That drinks the dews of night, and champs the howling
storm.

To lessen fruitless questions, I'm Cavallo;
Well known at Naples, though you know me not.
Cavallo; and a friend.

Rom. A friend?

Schid. Why not?

Rom. Because the age of miracles is past.
 Jewels from granite, kids from leopards' dens,
 Honey from spiders, and a saint from hell,
 Were not more worthy of belief. But since
 You proffer friendship, answer this. I have
 Pass'd many a melancholy, reckless, year,
 In seeking for my daughter. Large rewards!—
 All have been fruitless. I could toil with dangers,
 Wars, waves, and winds, 'mid lightning and the
 tempest;

Nay, I could bear with daggers and rack-wheels,
 Till time itself grew weary of their use,
 More like a man, than the intolerable torture,
 With which this mystery lacerates my soul.
 Can you say aught to rid me of this burden?
 Say yes; I'll—worship thee.

Schid. The, the, the—what?

Fra. Speak, sir. You seem as if you could.

Schid. I?—I?

Fra. If you know, speak: and not stand stammering
 there.

If you know, speak; and ease his soul at once.

Schid. How should I know? and why ask me?
 Perdition!

Sir—I know nothing of thy daughter:—Nothing.

(*To FRACASTRO.*) Enough for me to guard myself.

(*Aside.*) Confusion!

I stand like Judas in the hall of Pilate.

Rom. What brought thee hither, then? Declare.

Fra.

Declare.

I would not have a countenance like his,

For all the universe contains. Look, look:

Did ever mortal man behold the like?

Schid. I am from Naples. I was charged with treason:

Perhaps not wrongfully: My gaoler—yours.

An air—you'll well remember when you hear it;—

I am no great musician; but, no doubt,

You will excuse my poverty of skill. [*Plays.*]

Rom. Why, this is strange:—who taught thee that?

'Tis one,

Which I, in solace to my spirit, framed

Within my melancholy cell.

Schid.

Marcello.

Your friend;—my friend:—your gaoler;—my gaoler.

He told me, you composed it in the cell,

Where I have pass'd so many sleepless nights,

And miserable days. This was his harp.

“Go, seek ROMANO; play that air,” said he,

“ *And he will recognise his friend, MARCELLO ;*
 “ *And give thee welcome for his sake.*” I came :
 And am now ready, with full power, to serve thee.
 And here I must be honest, and confess,
 In serving thee, I hope to serve myself.

Rom. Serve me ? in what ?

Schid. Nay softly, signor : softly.

Say—would you think to look into a harp,
 For aught save melody ? Behold this slide.
 Draw it ;—two keys reward the secret search !
 Rich treasures ; yet most dangerous, if found
 On my poor person. They are yours ; and may—

Rom. But what keys are they ?

Schid. (*in a whisper.*) Those of Naples.

Rom. Ay ?

Schid. The town’s thine own : thy very own ;—to burn,
 To waste, to plunder, or to pulverize.
 Just as the pleasure of thy soul may be.

Rom. Zopyrus, Hanno, Catiline ;—choose which,
 Thy name shall hence be class’d with. For thou hast
 The life, the soul, the vigour of a giant,
 Warring on heaven. I thank thee from the core.
 You know,—you must know,—oh the odious harlot !
 She thinks me guilty of—Ha-ha ! Ha-ha !

Schid. (*aside.*) Hell and confusion—what a burst!

Fra. (*To LEPARDO.*) 'Tis terrible.

Schid. (*aside.*) I'd give five thousand ducats, I had
thrown

These keys and dagger in a whirlpool, rather
Than I had come to hear a laugh like that.

Rom. She thinks me guilty of a flagrant—murder!
Thou think'st the same.

Schid. I do not.

Rom. On thy soul?

Schid. Ay; on my soul.

Rom. My friend; my brother! nay—
Give me thy hand. St. Peter! In the name
Of every saint, what curdles up my blood?
I could as soon swear friendship with this man,
As with Schidōn—

Schid. (*aside.*) Be angry at nothing!
His face has turn'd so wan, his hair so grey,
I had begun to pity him:—but now!
Let him go on; turn idiot; and—prosper.
These keys are genuine. I had them from
The keeper of the city gates; whom I
Have bribed with gifts and many a golden promise.
Lead thou thine army, secretly, at night,

And I'm forsworn, unless the gates fly open.

(*Aside.*) Then what a capture for King Ferdinand!

Rom. Oh yes—we'll lead them: but before we do—

Schid. These keys—fac-similes! nay, take them,
take them.

King. (to VERCELLI.) Who can this be?

Rom. (*taking the keys.*) Who told thee, sir, that I
Would take advantage of a hangman's treason?
Not my good friend, MARCELLO, I am certain.
Hence, hence; get hence. I cannot trust thee, sir.
He, who is faithless to the land, that bore him,
Will be as faithless to the God, that made him;
Therefore to father, mother, friend, and wife,
All faithless:—doubly faithless then to me.

[*Throws down the keys.*]

Schid. (*aside.*) Well is't, I brought this dagger.

What a fool,

To venture on a madd'ning scheme like this!

Rom. One lives at Naples, and his name Schidoni.
A man of reckless passions. It is long
Since I have seen him; and I'm told, he is
So bloated with indulgences, that if
I saw the fiend, I ne'er could recognise
Th' assassin of Francesca. Dost thou know him?

Schid. Ay. I've caroused with him. He lived not far
From my poor cottage. Therefore, when I say,
I know him well, it is equivalent,
To say,—of all men breathing,—he is one,
Whom most I do—

Rom. Abominate? you must.
In that we associate. But remember, sir,
Though I do hate him, as the gates of hell,
And would do any thing to send him there,
I hate all traitors to their country more.
He knows me pure; Naples believes me guilty.
Drive him, my signors; drive him from the camp.
I will not harbour, nor take benefit,
From one so lost to every honest feeling.
Oh—that the leaves of autumn had, long since,
Made my grave yellow!

Schid. (to LEPARDO, &c.) Touch me, if ye dare.

Rom. Stay, my good friends: the man abhors Schidoni.
Aged he is, and wearied, too. Lepardo!
Give him refreshment. He was wrong'd, no doubt;
And passion has misled him. He forgot,
That treason to our country is a crime,
That kneels for mercy to the end of time.
He hates Schidoni! Show the man some favour.

Let us not take upon ourselves to judge

'Twiſt crime and motive, deed and aggravation.

Schid. (aside.) What,—am I always fated to be ſcorn'd,
Go where I will? Damnation! I will periſh,
But I will have a full revenge this moment.

*[Steals behind ROMANO, and attempts to ſtab him
in the back: his arm is arreſted by FRACASTRO.]*

Fra. Signor, forbear. The man is mine. This
ſword——

Thou ſhalt not ſtake thine honourable life,
Againſt a fiend's like that. Thou ſhalt; thou ſhalt not.
I'll teach the ſerpent, 'tis no waſte we live in.

[Closes with him.]

*Enter FONTANO, LAVINIA, FLORANTHE, and LORENZO,
from the ruins, and occupy a ſtation, unobſerved by
SCHIDONI.*

Lep. What has he dropt?

Sardo (stooping.) A miniature!

Schid. Stand off.

Lep. The lovelieſt angel, that mine eyes e'er look'd on.

Schid. Give it me, ſir. I claim it as mine own.

And may the hand, that robs me of it, wither,
Wriſt, arm, and ſhoulder, with a palsy; worſe

Than ever paralyzed an Egyptian Jew.
 Give it me, signor; give it me, I say.
 Remember, I'm a stranger. I demand
 Therefore a stranger's privilege. This young man,
 Whom I must venerate for the trust, he show'd,
 Thought I intended what I never dreamt of.
 Give it Romano? By the gods, thou shalt not.
 He shall not see it. Sirrah;—wretch;—confusion!
 Give it to me. I'll have it. If all fiends,
 Fabled to live in Tartarus, should say nay,
 Still I would have it.

Rom. Calm your passions, sir.

Now let me see the meaning of all this.

[*Takes the portrait.*]

Schid. May the man burn in everlasting sulphur!

Rom. Dream I or not? Hell opens, or the world
 Is fast degrading to a monstrous den,
 Where hornets, vampires, serpents, and hyenas,
 Only can breathe. Who art thou? who? where? when?
 How came this treasure in thy curst possession?
 Schidoni took it from the toilet, when
 He slew Francesca. Tell me;—thine;—how came it?

Schid. I took it;—I;—the harper:—He, whom you
 Cheated so basely of the living model.

See—here I stand, unterrified; a cynosure;
 A mark, a martyr to your treacherous arts.
 You fawn'd, bribed, cozen'd, and inveigled her.
 She loved you not;—she hated you!—the man,
 Whom most she loved and doted on, stands here;
 JOHN JULIAN LASCARIS SCHIDONI! Now,
 You know me now: I trust, you know me now.

[Strikes his foot accidentally against his harp.

Curst be all harps, and those that use them:—hence!—
 Thus, thus, and thus, I break thy damned strings;
 And wish the world were strung as loose as thou art.
 I am an idiot. (*To CERELLO.*) Sirrah! as I live,
 I'll not be stared at in this threatening way.

Cer. Stared at? Thou shalt; and spurn'd, too, if I
 please.

Schid. Think you to use me, as you use this hawk?

[Catching at it.

Cer. Touch, if you dare:—for by the gods——

Schid. Away;

Hawker and hawk, varlet and varl together.
 See—he is paralyzed and speechless. See—
 Shame and perdition seize thee; curse thee, serpent.
 Earth! rise and bury him. Thy blood, thy blood,
 May it flow black, and clot within thy veins.

May all thy flesh string, putrid, from thy bones,
And hang for vultures, kites, and wolves, to gorge on.

Rom. Off, off, Lepardo. Do not hold me thus.

Nay, nay, Fracastro, thou hast saved my life—
You, reverend palmers? nay, ye shall not;—cease!

Fra. Struggle, nay struggle, as thou wilt; by heaven,
Thou shalt not do it. Help us, Sardo, help.

Schid. Nay, let him come. He dares not. He's an
ocelot,

Furious, and stern; ferocious,—yet a coward!

Let him come on. Francesca;—listen!—she,

Whom all men hail'd an angel upon earth,

She had been mine; had not a man from Venice,

—Venice the damn'd!—had not a man from Venice,

You, you, sir,—you,—laid poison in her path,

And palsied all my efforts to obtain her.

You had the maid; and I the senseless image!

I was revenged beyond all human thought.

You know, how well I was revenged. Ye gods,

Angels, or devils, as ye list; come,—

I've struck him dumb.—Schidoni stands before you!

Rom. Away, away: I'll be restrain'd no longer.

*[Breaks from them; rushes forward; and is
about to close with him.]*

Schid. Stop, sir: slay me; you lose the secret. Now,
My passion's o'er; I'll reason with you.—*Where*
Is your lost child? Now strike me; strike; nay strike.
Here is my bosom, strike! your child—where is she?

Rom. Angels defend me!

Fra. He is breathless; nerveless.

Rom. Where is my child? Oh the great gods above—
Where is my child? I'll leave thy fate to heaven,
If thou wilt place her in mine arms again.

Schid. Dead. How she came so, I'll not answer.
Dead.

Rom. God of my fathers!

Schid. (*aside.*) Fool—oh fool, oh idiot;—
Fool, that I am, my passion has betray'd me.

Frac. (*to the King.*) Useless; all useless, reverend
palmer:—He
Is past all comfort,—paralyzed! Thou villain,
Bury this sword full deep into this heart—

Schid. And who art thou, that dar'st to call me villain?
Who would not act, as I have done? He's breathless!
Not all the hydras, gorgons, gnomes, nor fiends,
If such there are, can rob me of the joy
Of this proud moment. I'm revenged! a thousand—
Twenty, nay thirty, fifty thousand deaths,

Since death brings nothing but eternal sleep,
I'd die t' enjoy this ecstasy again.

King. I never saw horrific ecstasy,
Equal to this. No man;—Satan himself.

Schid. Who says, I'm mad? I am not mad: ye lie.

Fon. Behold these eye-balls in thine ecstasy.

Schid. Gorgons defend me—are mine eyes turn'd
traitors?

Fon. Shame to thy name, thy country, and the world.
There's not a fiend, in all the depths below,
Could do the deeds, which thou hast.

Schid. You?—Lavinia?—you?
Ruin'd;—undone! Lorenzo? monstrous, monstrous!
Legions of demons are let loose from hell.
Ha—what is this? Francesca? Hell—oh hell—

[*Turning from the statue.*

Turn where I will, I breathe the blast of hell;
Surrounded by the furies and the damn'd.

Rom. Perish, thou fiend; thou hated monster, perish.

[*Rushing towards him.*

King. Hold, hold; forbear:—I tell thee, hold;—forbear.
He shall not have the honours of a sword,
Jav'lin or scimeter, dagger or dirk.
The hangman shall reward him for his crimes.

Vercelli. BEHOLD YOUR KING.

Rom. A magistrate from heaven !

Schid. (*dropping his sword.*) A judge from hell !

Rom. Beyond all history.

Excuse mine error, sire ;—I knew thee not.

King. Rise, and receive this monument of truth ;
A sword, which never proved unjust to any.

Rom. (*rising.*) Thanks, royal sir.—My child !—
excuse me, sire ;

Excuse more awful homage at this moment.

Where are the ashes of my child ? where are they ?
Speak, or I'll crush these venomous bones, to earth.

[*Seizes him by the throat.*]

Schid. Hold, then, and hear.

Rom. Be brief.

Lep. He falls ;—he falls !

Fra. And at the feet, too, of the Signora's statue.

Schid. Curst be the day ;—I've fallen upon my
dagger !

Draw it ; 'tis poison'd ; draw it, or I perish.

Rom. Then let the poison travel through thy veins,
Palsy thy nerves, and melt into thy marrow.

Schid. Oh—my dear mother, I have wrong'd thee
much.

Where is my sword? my sword, I say;—my sword.
 Poison runs putrid through my veins. The fiends—
 See, how they roll 'mid locusts and dead bodies,
 Speckled with blood. My mother, mother, pardon!
 Hold, hold, I'm poison'd:—Scorpions and torpedos!
 Draw out the dagger; or I perish:—draw it.

[*Wrings the dagger from his side; and, throwing
 it away, it strikes the foot of the statue.*

Rom. Dost thou attempt to murder her again?
 Down, atheist, down; and learn in lowest hell,
 If death to thee be an eternal sleep,
 Or an eternal torment. Speak, I say;
 Where are the ashes of my daughter? where?

Schid. Mercy, Francesca;—call me back to life!

Fra. See, how the poison operates upon him.

Schid. On the dark margin of eternity—

Hide me, oh hide me. Oh, almighty Power!

Thy mercy is infinitude indeed,

If thou canst pardon such a wretch as I.

King. The pangs of dying in a wretch like this!

Schid. Could I but touch her statue, I were safe.

Nay.. let.. me.. touch thee ..only . one .. slight .. touch.

I . cannot .. reach .. it— . . . oh . . . the . pangs . . . of . . . dying!

King. Horrid;—most horrible!

Fra. Convulsed:—he dies!

Rom. Dead? and I left without a hope? no sign?
No word? no answer? Am I left to mourn
The death of one, who ruined me, when living?
Is the fiend dead? alas—my murder'd child,
Where? where?—oh never shall I see thee more.
Fate has so smote me with her iron wand—
A cave, a cave, amid the wilderness!
Oh let me wander, barefoot, parch'd, and wither'd,
Lions amid, and crocodiles, o'er sands,
That breathe of death in every scorching blast.
Sire, sire,—forgive me; I'm bereaved; no longer
Julio Romano; or a living man.

King. Bear out the miscreant:—hang him on a
gibbet:

And make it high, as human hands can form;
That all may see, for many a distant league,
His worthless, tarnish'd, and gangrening body,
Bleed, bleach, and ulcer, in the sultry blast.

Rom. Stop:—let me see the vision once again.
Ye gracious powers!
And did ye make me only to be victim,
To the vile craft of such a fiend as this?
A wretch so low, that, wearing human form,

Makes me to loathe the figure of a man.

[*Stretches his hands towards heaven.*

Receive and pardon, if ye can. I—never !

[*Retires hastily up the ruins.*

[*Exeunt LEPARDO, MARCO, &c. with the body.*

Re-enter ROMANO.

Lav. Ah me, it makes my bleeding heart run cold,
To see him rend his flowing mantle so,
Wring his pale hands, and strike his breast so wildly.

Lor. Do not disturb him, my Lavinia ; see,
Distraction sits already on the throne,
Where reason once held empire.

Lav. He approaches !

Rom. Save me, oh save me, from myself, once more.

[*Throws himself at the feet of the statue.*

King. This is an awful, dreadful, sight indeed.
I've climb'd Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb ; drank,
In silent awe, of Siloa's sacred stream ;
Knelt at thy gates, Jerusalem ; and kiss'd
The tombs of Memphis, and the dust of Thebes.
Yet does this scene excite my wounded spirit,
More than them all. A melancholy, touch'd

With deeper anguish, have I never seen,
Read, heard, or dreamt of. It compels to tears.

Rom. (rising.) Oh earth, oh sea,—ye planets, and ye
suns,

—Emblems, all pregnant, of omnipotence!—
And thou, ETERNAL ARCHITECT OF HEAVEN,
All-seeing, yet unseen; all-working, yet unwork'd;
Whose matchless attributes the air, the skies,
The universe of matter and of mind,
In one harmonious concert, celebrate:—
Sole power, sole love, sole wisdom, and sole end;
Grant me thy greatest of all earthly blessings:
Death, and reunion with Francesca's spirit!

King. Give me thy hand; and let thy heart pay
homage

To the mild wisdom, Nature speaks to all men.
Do not afflict thy manly spirit thus.
Remember,—bees from poisons oft distil
The healthiest sweets. 'Tis midnight:—wait for morn.
The scene, though darken'd and afflictive now,
Will, one day, brighten; and in glory show,
Why man may build his proudest hopes on sorrow.
He, who 'mid sublunary scenes did show
The mildest spirit, midst the deepest woe,
Now sits, in holy peace, on heaven's celestial bow.

Flo. (to FRACASTRO.) Hold this one moment. 'Tis a miniature.

(To ROMANO.)

Pardon my boldness, I entreat.
 Since heaven is just, all wise, all great;
 Let me conjure thee to control
 This awful agony of soul.
 Vast hills may rise from depths below,
 And waves upon their summits flow;
 The winds may howl, the thunders roll,
 And lightnings glance from pole to pole:
 Earthquakes may rend this rocky ball;
 New suns may rise, and planets fall; }
 BUT TRUTH'S UNCHANGEABLE.
 Though oftimes veil'd in crime's parade,
 And long disgraced; yet, undismay'd,
 Truth,—the midnight tempest past,—
 Unfolds her glorious face at last.
 'Tis thus with thee:—the time is come;—relent:
 Since all now see, that thou art innocent.

Rom. May heaven shower all its blessings on thy head!

And when old TIME has strew'd upon thy locks
 The snows of age and wisdom; mayst thou never
 Feel the dumb, paralyzing, touch of death;
 But rise, with life still blooming on thy cheek,
 To the pure regions of eternal glory!

Flo. Signor, I bend, in awful state, to thank thee.
 May I presume?—The covering of the portrait,

Which, from the garments of that horrid man,
Fell on this spot, is like what I, just now,
Placed in that noble Gentelezza's hand.
May I entreat to see it once again?

Rom. Ask; and my life shall sanctify the wish,
With most profuse performance. Take it.

Flo. Thanks.

The very image: yes, the very image!
Is it not, signor?

Fra. Ay—the counterpart.

Flo. And that gold chain, which hangs around thy
neck;

How came it there? I hung it on a cross,
In awful gratitude, for having past
The perils of a precipice. 'Tis mine.
It was my mother's;—grant it me.

Rom. Thy mother's?

What may this mean? I'm breathless! In the name
Of him, who sits high arbiter, who art thou?

Flo. That is a question, difficult to answer.
Nine years have pass'd, since from my father's house,
One stormy midnight, I was carried; 'mid
A vast, rude, multitude, who howl'd, and hiss'd,
No,—not like men,—but serpents. It was dreadful!

“What are they hissing at?” said I. “Your father;”
 Was the dread answer. Upon which I fell,
 Senseless; and did not, I am told, recover
 Speech, sense, or motion, till I found myself
 Stretch’d on a couch; my aching head reposing
 On the soft lap of old Theresa; housed
 In a large, sombre, solitary, mansion.

Rom. My head turns giddy.

Fra. Take mine arm.

Rom. Thanks;—thanks.

Flo. There I have lived; till, eight or nine days
 since,

Theresa told me to be gone. “*A lady*
 “*Comes here to-morrow;*” said the dame. “*The signor*
 “*Comes hither, too. He must not see thee, child.*
 “*For he does think, my husband poison’d thee,*
 “*A long time since. He gave him charge to do it.*
 “*But, Lord!—my Bernard would have slain himself,*
 “*Rather than harm one little hair of thine.*
 “*Indeed, my child, he wept, to think, he’d served*
 “*So many years; and then, ah well-a-day!*
 “*Be taken for a poisoner at last.*
 “*Go, go, my tit-mouse: go; begone.*” I wept.
 For the old lady had been kind to me;

And, ere I went, placed this dear portrait near
 My throbbing heart; and hung that golden chain
 Around my neck." " *They came with thee;*" said she,
 " *And may, one day, do service.*" Upon which,
 She gave this robe. " *Go, travel as a boy.*
 " *That robe will hide the weakness of thy sex.*
 " *Go; earn thy living, as thou canst;—by singing:*
 " *And never seek these guilty doors again.*"

Now let me cast this robe aside for ever.

Rom. Is this a vision? as I hope for grace,
 FRANCESCA'S image stands—all life—before me!

Flo. Then I'm thy daughter.

Rom. Come from heaven? Nay—touch me.
 Let me feel certain, I am still awake;
 Lest I may lose all certainty of joy,
 And think this ecstasy a dream.—Floranthe?
 Speak;—speak.

Fra. She cannot.—Love surpasses speech.

Rom. Joy, joy, unmeasured!—'Tis no dream;—'tis
 real.

I hold her safe; I fold her in mine arms.
 Speak, my sweet child; my angel; my Floranthe;
 And let the music of thy voice proclaim
 A paradise on earth.

Flo. My father;—father !

If I speak more, I perish in thine arms.

Rom. Oh heaven—what rapture pierces all my veins,
To hear those words ! The sacred name of father
Touches my soul, like sounds from heaven. My child !
Thus could I hold thee, till the time were come,
That I could place thee on thy mother's bosom.

Fra. (to LEPARDO.) Never, no never, did I see a
form,

So fair, so exquisite ;—a face so lovely.

I could fall down and worship.

King. (to FONTANO.) See—the hand
And will of heaven are always working.

Rom. Sire,
I soon can thank thee as I ought. Fracastro,
At this sweet hour, as magnet to its pole,
I turn to thee in gratitude. These tears,
—Far more delicious than delirious smiles,
Shower'd at a banquet,—tell a grateful tale.
Most royal sir ;—and you, my friends, mark well.
Here stands my benefactor : and to him— !
You saved my life, Fracastro :—ay, far more :
You saved my soul, my guilty soul, from falling.
This is my child. Should she, hereafter, smile—

Nay, do not hide thy blushes in my robe.
I know his value; and thy looks speak thine.

Fra. (kneeling.) If I could thank thee, signor; I were
worthless.

A form more beauteous, and a mind more lovely,
Sure never graced a paradise of angels.

Rom. (raising him.) Thou art my son; my saviour;
my Fracastro!

Sire! my delirium of delight is far
Beyond all language: and this earth, so late
A withering desert to my heart, a scene
Where hope now buds, and blossoms into bliss.

Flor. (to FONTANO.) Signor, where art thou? Let
me take thy hand.

Thine, too, Lavinia. Royal sir, my tongue
Is not accusom'd to address high persons.
Pardon me, therefore. I, who late had none,
Have now two fathers.

King. Two? nay, three; and none
So blest, so happy, as we all are now.

Flor. Except myself; and I feel lapp'd in heaven.

Rom. There's a sweet creature; and my daughter too!

King. Come, my sweet rose-bud; I am proud of thee.

Thy mother was an angel to us all;
Let me salute thee.

Flor. What—a king?

King. Sweet maid—

No king, that lives, but would adorn a throne,
By placing thee upon it. Now (*salutes her*);—Heaven
bless thee!

Fra. Fairest of creatures—may I touch thy hand?

Rom. Nay, do not frown. Look up, my child, look up.
He shows like Hercules in his flowing locks,
And bears Apollo in his shining front.
Here, take her hand, FRACASTRO; and let me
Declare, in volumes of a father's wish,
Fracastro's happiness in Floranthe's love.

King. Now, then, to Naples: we'll return in triumph;
Visit the monuments of those we loved;
Gaze on their epitaphs; and strew fresh flowers,
Around the tombs in which their ashes lie.
(*To VERCELLI.*) Now give the signal.

[*Scene changes; and a large army is beheld ranged,
file above file, round the monastery of Salvator.
The monks issue from the monastery, bearing*

crosses in their hands; the clouds roll off the summit of Vesuvius; the sun rises brilliantly; and military music is heard echoing, and re-echoing, among the distant mountains.

ROMANO kneels before the King to receive the order of St. Catherine; FONTANO, FRACASTRO, FLORANTHE, LORENZO and LAVINIA, surround the King and ROMANO; and the scene closes with a burst of enthusiastic rapture from all present.

THE END.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

By the same Author,

THE BEAUTIES, HARMONIES, AND SUBLIMITIES
OF NATURE. 4 vols. 8vo.

"A work, singularly rich in all that can touch the heart, and interest the imagination."—*Dr. Drake's Evenings in Autumn.*

"After every excursion into the classic scenery of Greece and Italy, we are beckoned back to Llangollen and Ffestiniog; to the straits of Thermopylæ is opposed the pass of Cwm Dyr; and to the Arcadian Tempe, the imprisoned paradise of Nant-Frangon. These pages, the author tells us, were the results of hours stolen from application to higher interests, and from the severity of graver subjects; and he praises the periods of tranquil enjoyment, during which they were composed. Without this declaration, we should not have inferred, that the work had been produced thus casually; since the number of authors consulted is very considerable. They are pages, breathing and communicating the bounding, elastic, spirits of a delighted traveller; and seeming to admit the fresh mountain air into the book-room."—*Monthly Review.*

"The notes, which enrich this work, are valuable beyond all price. These notes display amazing attention to the subject; and the references place before us an infinite host of authorities for the authenticity of the matter, of which the text is composed; and the whole work implants in the mind a profusion of knowledge and enjoyment, which ally themselves with our more estimable passions and affections; rendering virtue more agreeable to us, the past more capable of our understanding, the present more endurable, and the future more pregnant with hope and admiration."—*Anti-jacobin.*

"This is a work of much taste, research, and combination; and forms a rich fund of literary amusement for retirement. The author has a true relish for all the beauties of Nature, and a mind tuned to the harmonies of elegant composition. It evinces how richly science, literature, and the elegant arts impregnate the privacy of life; and how much the love of these is calculated to prove a shield against the misfortunes of the world."—*Monthly Magazine.*

"In this assemblage and multitude of things, evincing the author's very ample literary attainments, and comprehensive knowledge of Nature, there is no appearance of pedantry or ostentation. His numberless references are in the manner of a person so really fraught with the diversities of literature, that they overflow and emanate without intending it; of a person, so surrounded and crowded with recollections, that he is absolutely obliged to speak the names of a number of them, that they may, as it were, stand out of the way for him to go on."—*Annual Register.*

"This work embraces a most extensive subject; the whole field of Nature with its relative associations; and what has been said of LORD BACON might, with great truth, be applied to the author of it; viz. "that his feeling for Nature was the main side on which his philosophy ran into poetry, and vented itself in a very graceful, as well as grand enthusiasm, befitting one of the high priests of wisdom."—*Literary Chronicle.*

